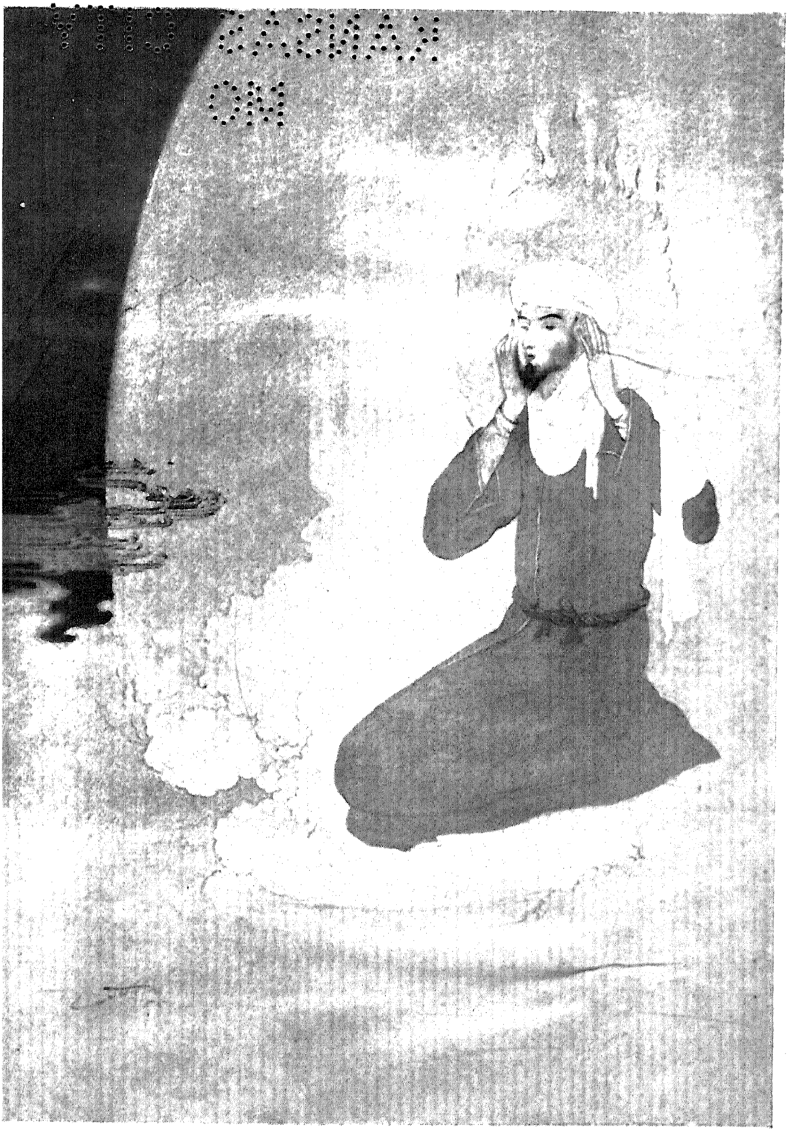


ALIKE FOR THOSE WHO FOR TO-DAY PREPARE
AND THOSE THAT AFTER A TO-MORROW STARE,
A MUEZZIN FROM THE TOWER OF DARKNESS CRIES:
" FOOLS! YOUR REWARD IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE!"

(Verse from *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.)

[*Frontispiece*

A HANDBOOK OF INDIAN ART

BY E. B. HAVELL

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE speech of H.M. the King at the opening of the School of Oriental Studies in London, and the efforts now being made by the India Society to endow a permanent Lectureship in Indian Art at the School, suggest the need of a suitable handbook for the subject. Public interest in Indian art, both in India and in Europe, has increased greatly since I made the first attempt to explain its ideals and modes of expression in my *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, now out of print.

The present work, embracing architecture, sculpture, and painting in its scope, aims at giving such a concise survey of the whole subject, free from dry technicalities, as will interest both the student and general reader, and serve as a useful handbook for travellers in India. At the same time it attempts a solution of several interesting problems which have exercised the minds of archæologists for many years, and gives the results of further researches in a field which still offers unlimited scope for the art student. In this respect, therefore, it enlarges upon and sometimes revises the conclusions arrived at in my previous works. It may serve as the foundation of a full and competent history of fine art in India, which still remains to be written.

In the architectural section I have aimed at giving such an explanation as will enable the reader to perceive

the intention of the builder, and correlate stūpa, temple, monastery, palace, mosque, and tomb with the thought and life of the period to which they belong, rather than to classify them in a dry academic manner which makes the builder's intention as unintelligible as the historian's explanation. Only when the craftsman's idea is realised will Indian architecture become a subject of living interest, an open book in which the thought and life of India are written from Vedic times down to the present day. The architecture of India will not then appear as a bewildering museum of marvels belonging to a bygone age, but as a still living tradition of practical craftsmanship constantly readapting itself to the spiritual and material needs of the age, and bearing witness to the wonderful constructive work of our Aryan predecessors, who three thousand years ago, occupying the same position in the East as their successors do to-day, laid the whole foundation of Indian civilisation upon which we are attempting to build. The spirit of the ancient Aryan empire builders will be our best guide in this great task.

The section devoted to sculpture explains the leading ideas which underlie the Buddhist and Hindu conceptions of the Deity and of divine worship, as they are expressed in the finest works of different periods. Apart from the extraordinary artistic interest of these achievements of the temple-sculptor, the study of them will assist those who wish to penetrate deeper into the religious thought of modern India.

A point of much importance for the correct classification of Indian temples is the relation of the image to its shrine or temple, as every Buddhist or Hindu image has an architectural framework appropriate for it. The indications I have given may lead the way to a more systematic treatment of a subject hitherto neg-

lected by archæologists ; but this is only possible for those who have the advantage of living in India.

A brief review of the different schools of Indian painting, with typical illustrations, is given in the third section of the book.

For permission to make use of official photographs and illustrations, my acknowledgments are due to the Secretary of State for India, and to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington ; also to Mr. Norman Blount, Calcutta ; Mr. C. Stanley Clarke, Curator, Indian Section, Victoria and Albert Museum ; Mr. O. C. Gangoly ; Lt.-Colonel Victor Goloubeff ; Dr. Karl Madsen, Director of the Royal Museum of Art, Copenhagen ; Sir John Marshall, Director-General of the Archæological Survey of India ; Professor W. Rothenstein ; Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, C.I.E., and to Lady Wantage for kind help in providing illustrations. I am further greatly indebted to Mr. F. W. Thomas, Librarian of the India Office, for his always ready assistance in details connected with the text.

E. B. H.

Jan. 1920.

CONTENTS

SECTION I. ARCHITECTURE

SECTION II. SCULPTURE

SECTION III. PAINTING

LIST OF PLATES

ABBREVIATIONS.—I.O., India Office. A.S.I., Archæological Survey of India.

SCULPTURE

SECTION I

ARCHITECTURE

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF INDIAN ART—THE STŪPA, OR KING'S MONUMENT

THOUGH Sanskrit literature gives a vista of a great Aryan civilisation planted in Indian soil perhaps several millennia before the Christian Era, the evidence of its artistic evolution during this long period, which may lie buried on the sites of ancient Indian cities, such as Ajodhya, Mathurā, Kanauj, and Rājagriha, has not yet been unearthed. Indian archæological research, as yet, hardly goes farther back than the third century B.C., when the Buddhist Emperor-Saint, Asoka, built splendid stūpas to enshrine the relics of the Blessed One, and marked the holy sites of Buddhism with colossal pillars carved in stone and inscribed with his edicts. These stūpas and pillars, together with the remains of chapels, monasteries, and hermitages, some structural and some carved in the living rock, provide the earliest visible evidence of the origins of Indian art.

It happens that the monuments of Asoka's time were almost exclusively dedicated to Buddhist worship; and as Buddhist doctrine was a revolt against the teaching of Brahmanism, it might be assumed that Asoka's propaganda brought about an entirely new departure in Indian building traditions—that early Buddhist art is to be entirely explained by the teaching of Buddhism. This would limit the field of investigation to the three centuries which preceded Asoka's

conversion to Buddhism, which took place about 256 B.C., a period embracing the foundation of the Persian Empire by Cyrus, its overthrow by Alexander the Great, and the latter's famous expedition into India. Artistic research, in fact, has rarely gone beyond this limit, and the influence of Persia and of Greece during these centuries is persistently upheld by the highest authorities as that which dominated Indian art of the Mauryan period, and shaped its subsequent development.

It is apparent that Perso-Greek masons were among the many employed in Asoka's public works, and no doubt their exceptional skill gave them a high rank in the select body of craftsmen attached to the imperial service. But though it may be inevitable, according to the inductive method of archæological research, to describe the capitals of Asokan pillars as "bell-shaped" and "Persepolitan," such classification begs the whole question of the origins of early Indian art. Neither is it possible, by mere technical analysis of this kind, to discover the deeper meaning of any art, or to relate the monuments of a past age to the life and times of the people who built them.

The stūpa, as is well known, was a relic shrine and a symbol of the passing of the Buddha into Pari-Nirvāna, the boundless Ocean of Eternity. In Buddhist history it was primarily the funeral monument of the royal monk, the Prince of the Sākyas, who taught the four Aryan truths, the Aryan Eightfold Path, and founded the Sangha, organised after the customs and traditions of an Aryan clan. Although the stūpa apparently belongs almost exclusively to Buddhism or its rival cult, Jainism, its origin cannot be explained in a sectarian sense. Its history did not begin with the death of Gautama Buddha, or of Mahāvīra. We shall

understand it better by describing it as the mausoleum, or funeral monument, of an Aryan king or chieftain. The Buddha was given a royal funeral by the Aryan tribesmen as the Head of the Sangha. Similar honours were paid to his successors, and to all the Abbots of the great Buddhist monasteries, who on state occasions adopted the insignia of Indo-Aryan royalty: temporal kings bowed down to them, and even gave up their thrones to them. The royal umbrella raised on the top of the stūpa was not mere religious symbolism: it was in the first instance a recognition of the social rank, real or assumed, of the spiritual teachers whose ashes were deposited there.

Indian building traditions in Asoka's time were of much greater antiquity than the palaces of Darius, and it is not necessary to account for the perfection of Asokan masonic craftsmanship by assuming that it was borrowed from Iran. The royal craftsmen of Persepolis probably borrowed as much from India as the Mauryan craftsmen borrowed from Western Asia. The Iranians and Indo-Aryans were co-heirs of the Aryan tradition, but the symbolism of the "bell-shaped" capital of Persepolis, as we shall presently see, is Indian rather than Persian.

So with the stūpa itself, we shall only get a clear conception of its place in Buddhist history by connecting it with Indo-Aryan traditions, of which Vedic literature and the epics of Indo-Aryan, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, are the record. The connection of the stūpa with Buddhist religious ritual was not derived entirely from the circumstance of Gautama Buddha's royal birth. The Kshatriyas, or the warrior class, to which he belonged, had been from time immemorial the spiritual leaders of the Aryan people. The Kshatriya king, or chieftain, *ex officio* presided over

the sacrificial rites of the Aryan tribe or clan. He was regarded as the representative, or offspring, of the deity invoked. Thus the royal line of Ajodhya in the Rāmāyana claimed to be of the Sūrya-vamsa—the race of the Sun-god, Sūrya[1]—while the Pāndava and Kaurava princes in the Mahābhārata were said to belong to the Chandra-vamsa—the race of the Moon-god, Chandra. The cult of king-worship would naturally have two branches, the one in which *bhakti*, or devotion to the deity in the person of the living king, was the starting-point; the other rooted in ancestor worship, with the stūpa of the deceased monarch as its shrine. The Sun-god was the presiding deity of the one, the Moon-god of the other. The changes of the moon determined the dates on which *shrāddha* offerings to deceased ancestors were made.

The Buddha himself condemned as worthless the whole system of Vedic sacrifices, including in his ban astrology, divination, spells, omens, and witchcraft; but in the earliest Buddhist stūpas known to us, the symbolism is entirely borrowed from the sacrificial lore of the Vedas. The Buddha, indeed, was emphatic in declaring that the Eightfold Path of Good Living along which he led his followers was the ancient Aryan way, trodden by Buddhas of a bygone age.[2]

It has been assumed by archæologists, following Fergusson's lead, that we must draw a hard-and-fast line between the ritual of Hinduism and the ritual

[1] The Kings of Egypt, beginning with the Fifth Dynasty, were also reputed to be the sons of Ra—the sun-god of Heliopolis. Each king of this dynasty built for himself a sanctuary of Ra, and the charge of these sun-temples was given to specially honoured nobles. (H. R. Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 129–30.)

[2] The metaphor of the Eightfold Path was borrowed from the processional path of the Aryan fortified settlement, which generally had eight gates.

of the Vedas; that the temple worship of the former is mostly derived from aboriginal superstitions adopted by the Brahmans, and that the latter is pure Aryan. On this theory Fergusson tried to explain the origin of the most conspicuous feature of Hindu temple architecture in Northern India, the curvilinear spire, or sikhara.

But the more the symbolism of Hindu architecture is understood, the clearer it becomes that, just as the chanting of the Vedic hymns in the temple service of to-day follows the musical traditions of three thousand years ago, born in the mountain-groves of Ariana, so the design of the temple itself is also directly derived from the sacrificial rites of the ancient Aryans in India.

Throughout these Vedic rites, as described in the Brāhmanas, one can trace the same structural elements, though in a primitive form, and the same symbolism as are found in the Silpa-sāstras, the canonical books of Hindu craftsmen. In Hindu temples the ceremonies connected with the worship of the Fire-spirit, Agni, began with the construction of huts or tabernacles of various shapes, oriented differently in relation to the house, and with doors facing different points of the compass.[1] These sacrificial tabernacles, though per-

[1] In the Agny-ādhēya, or consecration of the household fires, there was a round hut placed on the west with doors on the east and south; a square hut on the east with doors on the east and west; a crescent-shaped hearth for one fire, and a round hearth for another, etc. (see Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, pp. 156–7). Very similar instructions for the building of temples are given in Mānasāra. Thus a temple of Brahmā, the Creator, must have a door on all four sides—the four doors of the sky. A temple of Vishnu, the Preserver, must have one door facing the rising sun, Vishnu taking the place of Sūrya, the ancient Aryan sun-god. A temple of Siva, the Lord of Death, must have one door facing the setting sun. A Brahmā pillar was square, a Vishnu pillar octagonal, and a Siva pillar sixteen-sided. A plain cylindrical pillar symbolised Chandra, the Moon.

haps primitive in form and structure, served all the purposes of temples, and were doubtless the prototypes of those which were in later times built, on a great and costly scale, of permanent materials. In them the officiating priest, the householder, or Kshatriya chieftain, passed days, sometimes even a year, performing the prescribed rites.

Now, when the king or chieftain, assisted by his *purōhita*, or chaplain, presided over the tribal sacrifices as the son of Sūrya, the Sun-god, it is more than probable that the sacrificial hut constructed for him was of a special form easily distinguished by the crowd of the "impure," who were not allowed to enter the consecrated ground, that it was crowned by the royal or tribal ensign, and marked with the symbols of the Sun-god.

Furthermore, as the lighting of fires was an essential part of the Vedic ritual, it may be assumed that the sacrificial chamber was constructed so that the fire might burn effectively, and with the least inconvenience to the sacrificer—i.e., it must have had some kind of chimney with appropriate vent-holes for the smoke. All these conditions are fulfilled perfectly by the sikhara of the Hindu temple. The tall spire over the shrine, pierced by the sun-windows, which now are only ornamental since the shrine is no longer a fire-chamber, would have served admirably the purpose of a chimney. It forms a conspicuous landmark; it is crowned by the same insignia of royalty as Asoka's imperial standards—the *amalaka*, or pericarp of the blue lotus, which is the flower of Vishnu-Sūrya, the Preserver of the Universe, and specially the patron deity of a Kshatriya king. In the earliest known examples the curvilinear faces of the sikhara are always decorated with Sun-emblems. The name *vimāna*, the

chariot, given to the temple shrine, connects it definitely with the sacrificial rites of the ancient Aryan warrior-priest; and as if to emphasise the fact, the wheels of the chieftain's war-chariot are sometimes carved in stone on two sides of the vimāna, as in the temple of Sūrya at Konārak. This suggests that the chariot of the Aryan chieftain, with a bambu sikhara lashed to it, often served as a sacrificial hut, especially in time of war.

The peculiar form of the sikhara is certainly derived from bambu construction—bambu being the universal material for temporary structures of this kind in the holy land of the Aryans in India.

But Aryan history points to the conclusion that the sikhara derives ultimately from the conical mud huts of Mesopotamia and Persia, such as exist there in the present day. The stūpa also probably comes from the valley of the Euphrates. One of the most interesting discoveries of modern archæology is the fragmentary history of Aryan rule in Mesopotamia, for it helps to explain much that is obscure in the origins of Indian art. About 1746 B.C. Babylon was stormed and sacked by the Hittites. On their retreat the city was occupied by an Aryan tribe, the Kassites, and their chieftain, Gandash, founded a dynasty which lasted for six centuries.

About the same time another Aryan tribe, the Mitanni, founded a kingdom farther north, between the Tigris and Euphrates. Sūrya, the ancient Vedic Sun-god, was the chief god of the Kassites, and the gods of the Mitanni were also those which appear in the Vedic hymns—Varuna, the Concealer, the ruler of the night sky, and of the cosmic ocean into which the sun disappears at night; Indra, the ruler of the day, who, like Sūrya, was the especial patron of the Aryan warrior, said to be the brother of Agni, the Fire-spirit;

and the Ashvins, the twin horsemen who preceded the coming of Ushas, the Dawn-maiden. Among the later kings of the Mitanni we find the name of Dushratta (or Dasaratha)—one which is very familiar in Indo-Aryan literature from the story of the Rāmāyana, and in Indian history as the name of Asoka's son and successor. Among the finds at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt, is a series of letters written by Dushratta to his relative Amenhetep III, King of Egypt, inscribed on clay tablets in the cuneiform script of Babylonia.[1]

During the six centuries of Aryan domination in the Euphrates valley, we can hardly doubt that there was a close communication between the Indian and Mesopotamian branches of the Aryan family, and there are remarkable resemblances to be noted between the Aryāvarta of Mesopotamia and that of the Panjab. The Aryans in Mitanni were living in a land of many rivers on the slopes of an "abode of Snow," the Taurus mountain range, sacred to the Bull—which in Babylonia was a symbol of the Sun ploughing his way among the Stars. It may be only a curious coincidence that on the western side of the Taurus, where their powerful neighbours the Hittites worshipped a god whose emblems, like Siva's, were a trident and a bull,[2] lies the Anatolian vilayet called Sivas with a chief town of the same name, a district towards which the sun-worshipping Aryans of Mitanni must have turned their faces when they adored the setting sun. Was there another Mount Kailāsa in the Anatolian plateau worshipped as the Sun-god's paradise?

The Aryan kings of Mitanni and of Babylon, like those of Vedic India, left no records of temple building or of sculpture. Their sacred literature was handed

1 See H. R. Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 258–60.

2 See Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, v. 134.

down orally from one generation to another, and, says Mr. H. R. Hall, "obviously they cared little for the religion, and probably less for the literature and arts, of their highly civilised subjects."[1] From which he concludes that both the Kassites and Mitannians were uncultured people who learnt civilisation from the people they conquered.[2] Fergusson arrived at a similar conclusion regarding the ancient Aryan invaders of India, but this seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of the principles of Indo-Aryan culture. A fine porcelain dish is useless to the orthodox Brahman, because his religion enjoins him to eat his meals from a platter of fresh leaves, which is to be thrown away directly after use. Similarly it was not from want of culture or of technical ability that the ancient Aryans did not commit their sacred literature to writing, and built no permanent structures for their sacrificial rites. It was that they feared the abuse of the magic power of the *mautram* which would arise if the sacred mysteries were revealed to the vulgar; the efficacy of the sacrifice would be impaired if the uninitiated took part in it, or if the "impure" craftsman assisted in the preparations. The construction of their fire-altars was an exact science involving all the knowledge of geometry possessed by the ancient world; an error of calculation or in the ritual prescribed might bring dire disaster upon the sacrificer. Therefore the Aryan craftsmen who planned the altars, built the tabernacles of the Fire-spirit, and cut and carved the posts of the sacred trees, were a special class ranking with Brahmans. They were in the king's service, protected by special laws, and took a leading part in the constructive work involved in the sacrificial rites.

This covered a very wide field, for not only the royal

[1] *Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 200. [2] Ibid., p. 202.

palace, but the entire Aryan settlement, was reckoned as sacrificial ground. They were the town-planners and architects of the Aryan community. Like the Brahmans, they were spiritual teachers, and as such it was held to be disgraceful for them to build houses for gain.[1]

Seeing that before the time of the Buddha these Aryan royal craftsmen thus deliberately preferred wood as building material because it was the substance which produced the sacred fire, and also of set purpose used other impermanent materials in their improvised temples, rather than brick or stone, it is highly improbable that we shall ever discover evidence of the origins of Indo-Aryan art, especially of temple architecture, other than that which is disclosed in the existing early monuments and in the surviving traditions of Indian craftsmanship. All the weight of this evidence is against the theory that the authors of the Vedic hymns and of the Upanishads, an active, martial people, who by force of their intellect imposed their ideas upon many other races of mankind, were dreamers who lacked constructive genius and the technical skill which belongs to it.

Vedic thought, Vedic tradition and custom dominate the art of India in the earliest times, as they have continued to do so down to the present day. And it is not among the débris of ruined cities, or by the methods of the archæologist and philologist, that we shall ever penetrate to the roots of its inspiration. For it grew first and lived for untold generations in the Himālayan forests, where the tree of the Devas, the deodar, still lifts its lordly crown, in those grand forest-cathe-

[1] The tradition of the high status they held in ancient India survives in the name *āchārya*, which is used as a cognomen by the higher caste artisans of Southern India in the present day.

drals where the ancient Aryans first sang the hymns of the Rig-Veda—as they are still sung in the "thousand-pillared" halls of Hindu temples—their sonorous chants reverberating from tree to tree like the drone of a mighty organ. It was there that Indra, crashing with his thunderbolt, and the Maruts, the Storm Winds, chafing the tops of cedar and pine, lighted Agni's sacrificial fire; when Rudra, "the Roarer,"[1] rushed like a fiery serpent down the deep ravines, clearing a path through the jungles and seasoning the soil for the Aryan ploughmen, but often in his rage taking their cattle or human victims as his toll; hence he had to be propitiated by voluntary burnt offerings and sacrifices.

In sequestered groves, among the mountains, the Vedic Rishis, sheltered from the raging elements, guarded the shrine of the sacred fire precious to the Aryan homestead and listened to the Devas whispering in the tree-tops the secrets of the universe; or worshipped them at the foot of their Himālayan thrones—the mystic Lotus-flowers of the cosmic lake,[2] pink or crimson when the dawn flushed on them in the East, golden when Sūrya sank in glorious majesty in the West, and silvery white when King Soma or Chandra reigned at night. The imagery of this ancient Himālayan poetry, the ritual of the Aryan mountain-forest cult, and the religious teaching which grew out

[1] Rudra, the Vedic form of Siva, seems to have been regarded as the destructive aspect of the Fire-spirit. In Rig-Veda I. cxiv. he is invoked as "the accomplisher of sacrifices, the tortuous," "the destroyer of heroes," and prayers are offered that his "cow-killing and man-slaying weapon" may be averted.

[2] The "sea of milk" of Vedic and Puranic mythology is no doubt a poetical simile for the vast stratum of low-lying fleecy clouds which sometimes collects over the Himālayan valleys, the snow-peaks rising above it being compared by the Aryan poets to the lotus-flowers blooming in the Himālayan lakes.

of its philosophy, formed the basis of the symbolism of all the art of India throughout all its subsequent technical modifications.

To return now to the earliest known Indo-Aryan monument—the stūpa; its connection with the Aryan traditions of pre-Buddhist India can be traced both in the Vedic funeral ritual, and in the structure of the stūpa itself.

According to Buddhist tradition, eight different Indo-Aryan tribes built stūpas to contain the remains of the Buddha, while two more were built to preserve the ashes of the funeral pyre, and the iron vessel in which the Blessed One's body had been cremated. We know, from the records of Vedic ritual, that it was the Aryan custom for relatives to collect the fragments of bones of a deceased person from the funeral pyre, and to deposit them in an urn which was subsequently buried in the ground. Among Vedic rites was one called *Pitrimedha*, or the sacrifice for ancestors, performed when a monument was raised over the funeral urn.[1] The exact character of the monument is not described, but it is clear that the Aryan tribes, in building stūpas to honour the Sākhyan chieftains, were not creating a precedent, but following an ancient Vedic tradition. The Buddhist stūpa, when it was not merely a cenotaph or memorial, was built to contain a funeral urn; the railing, or the enclosure surrounding the sacred relics, was known as the *vedikā*, the Sanskrit word used for sacrificial ground in Vedic rites; the cross-bar of the rail was called *sūchi*—another allusion to Vedic ritual, for *sūcha* means a shoot of the sacred kusha grass, which was spread upon the place of sacrifice. Again, the lofty terrace at the base of the stūpa used as the procession path of the pilgrims was

[1] See Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, p. 151.

called *medhī*, derived from *medha*, sacrifice.[1] The symbolism of the *pradakshinā*, or circumambulatory rite performed by Buddhist pilgrims, was likewise derived from Vedic sun-worship. The Aryan people, when they went in solemn procession round an altar, keeping the right hand towards it—and also their cattle as they trod out the corn on the threshing-floor—were, like the Buddhist pilgrims, "turning the wheel of the Law,"[2] i.e., they were following the path of the Universal Law which directed the Sun in its orbit. The Buddha only changed the Aryan concept of the Law from a law of sacrifice to a law of spiritual evolution propounded by himself. In Buddhist art, therefore, the ancient Aryan sun-emblem remained the symbol of the Law, and early Buddhist ritual was a purified form of the ancient Aryan ritual minus the Brahman priest and his elaborate and costly animal sacrifices.

But, it may be asked, if the ancient Aryans always, like the Buddhists, built stūpas to contain the ashes of their illustrious dead, why are there no traces of their existence to be found before Buddhist times? The explanation is also to be found in Vedic ritual. Like the tabernacles used in the Vedic sacrifices, the stūpas were temporary structures built for the occasion of the sacrifice, and removed when the sacrifice was over. The sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors only extended to three generations. If the *shrāddhas* had been duly performed by his relatives, the spirit of the great-grandfather needed no more their pious help. He passed away to the regions beyond the solar sphere.

[1] *Medhī* or *methī* was also the name of the circle made by the Aryan cattle when they trod out the corn on the threshing-floor.

[2] In certain Vedic rites a chariot-wheel was fastened to a post, and turned towards the right by a Brahman, while he chanted a hymn from the Sam-Veda. Hence the expression, "Turning the Wheel of the Law."

His stūpa was removed or allowed to decay, and his ashes, probably, were thrown into a sacred river, as is the custom in modern Indian ritual.

If this conclusion is correct, Aryan culture should not be misjudged, as it has been by archæological writers, because so few traces of pre-Buddhist culture have been discovered. The art of Bharhut, Sānchī, and Kārlē is the direct offspring of Indo-Aryan culture, though the craftsmen were doubtless often of non-Aryan race.

CHAPTER II

THE VEDIC CHANDRA CULT AND THE STŪPA

THE symbolic art which found expression in the construction and decoration of the stūpa will be better understood if the stūpa itself is first considered as an Aryan royal tomb, rather than as a Buddhist monument. The stūpa in its earliest known form was a dome roughly hemispherical in shape, the procession path at the base being usually enclosed by the massive railing, known as a vedikā, such as surrounded an Aryan palace, fortified camp or settlement, or kept off the "impure" at Vedic sacrifices. The vedikā had an entrance gateway, or *torana,* at each of the cardinal points, similar to that which is represented in Buddhist sculptures as the approach to a royal palace or town. On the summit of the stūpa was the receptacle for the cinerary urn of the king or hero, crowned by the royal umbrella, and often surrounded, like the stūpa itself, by the vedikā which marked off holy ground. Sometimes, for greater safety, the urn was buried deeply in the structure of the stūpa. The exterior of the dome was plastered, so that the deeds of the hero or saint might be depicted on it for the edification of the relatives or pilgrims as they went round in solemn procession. The stūpa, as it now exists, is nearly always a solid structure of brick or stone, but probably it was originally a domical hut built of bambu or wooden ribs. Thus the earliest stūpa may have been the Aryan

chieftain's hut or tent, imitated or reproduced in Vedic funeral rites as a temporary abode for the spirit of the deceased, until the due performance of the *shrāddhas* by his relatives helped him to pass from the earthly sphere.

Vedic rites may be divided into two main classes, in which the germ of the two main divisions of modern Hinduism, the Vaishnava and Saiva sects, may be discovered. The first were addressed to the spirits of the day—Sūrya, the Sun; Ushas, the Dawn; Indra, the wielder of the Thunderbolt, brother of the Fire-god, Agni, and others. They were joyful rites accompanied by songs, and were performed in the daytime by the Kshatriya householder or the chieftain of the tribe to secure the prosperity of the living. The chieftains who presided at the tribal sacrifices were the Sūrya-vamsa, the ministrants of the Sun-god, and from these patriarchal rites sprang the idea of the *bhakti-marga*, the path of devotion, and *karma-marga*, the path of service, which became the leading motives of Vaishnava religious teaching. The second class included all the rites performed for the benefit of the dead, which were addressed to Chandra, the Moon, Varuna, the God of the night sky, and to Yama or Siva, the Lord of Death.

These were associated with the pessimistic school of thought, mainly Brahmanical, of which both Saivism and Buddhism were branches, looking for *moksha*, or liberation by following the *jnāna-marga*, the way of knowledge, whether it was that indicated by the Vedic seers, or the Eightfold Path pointed out by Sākhya-Muni.

The rites of both classes were often intermingled, but those of the Chandra cult were naturally centred round the stūpa and the cremation ground, while the

sacrificial hut, or the car of royalty with the sikhara roof, naturally became the principal shrine of the Sūrya cult. It was thus that the stūpa became the sacred symbol of Buddhism, for the early school of Buddhism, the Hīnayāna, was essentially pessimistic, teaching the vanity of earthly desires. And in taking over the symbols of the Chandra cult, Buddhism adopted the whole symbolic framework of Vedic sacrificial rites, though the burnt offerings and oblations were no longer to be considered as the means of salvation; *moksha,* or liberation, was to be obtained by the suppression of the fires of evil thought and action, of lust, hatred and envy, anger and wrong thinking.[1]

All the symbols and metaphors commonly described as Buddhist—the wheel, the trisula, the railing, the eightfold path, etc., as well as the form and planning of the stūpa and its accessories, were Aryan, and connected with the Vedic rites of the Sūrya and Chandra cults before they became Buddhist. If one considers the essential character of the Vedic sacrificial rites, it will become clear why Buddhist teaching brought about a radical change in Aryan art practice, so that the art of the Aryan royal craftsmen was no longer an art of wood and clay, bambu and thatch, but an art of fine masonry and brickwork, of which we see the first development at Bharhut, Sānchī, Kārlē, and elsewhere.

In the first place, Asoka's adoption of Buddhism as the Aryan state religion made the stūpa with all its accessories a permanent memorial and shrine of the Blessed One, instead of the temporary resting-place of the remains of a Kshatriya chieftain. The Buddhist Church needed more durable structures than the improvised tabernacles provided for Vedic sacrifices. Wood retained all its practical advantages as building

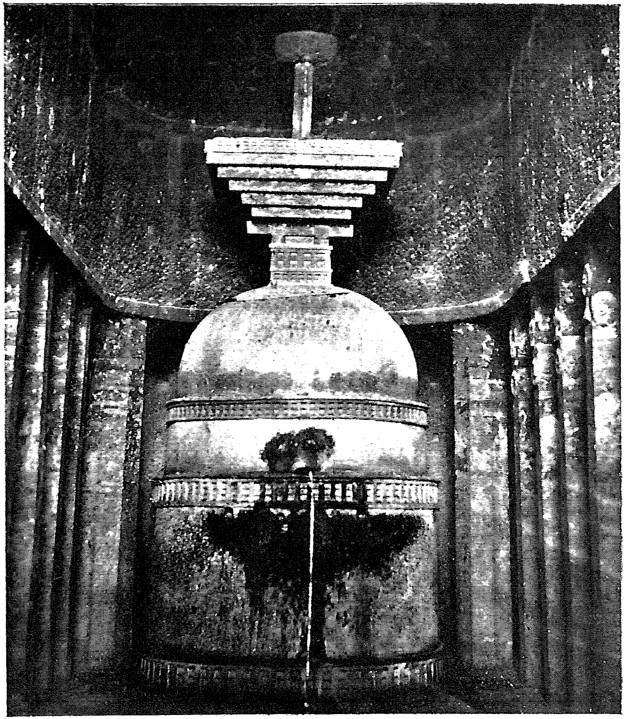
[1] *Buddhism,* Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 181.

material, but it lost the sacramental character it had acquired as the means of sacrifice and the vehicle of the Fire-god, Agni. At the same time, the forms of Aryan craftsmanship, such as the tribal ensigns, the carved sacrificial posts and railing, the tabernacles in which the Yogi meditated, and the stūpa, preserved the sacramental character they had acquired in the Vedic era, and were therefore for a long time closely imitated by the Buddhist masons and sculptors. This was not, as is generally assumed, because the technical skill for adapting wooden construction to that of stone was lacking.

Buddhism, also, though it was by no means a creed of universal brotherhood in the same sense as Christianity—for the Buddha would not admit slaves, debtors, nor persons in the royal service into his Sangha—certainly must have made the Aryan building craft less exclusive; for in rejecting the Vedic sacrificial system, Buddhism abolished the distinction between the "pure" who could, and the "impure" who could not, take part in the performance of sacrifices. Thus an Indian Buddhist king had a much wider choice of craftsmen for the royal service than would have been the case if he had followed the pre-Buddhist Aryan traditions.

It was not, however, until Asoka's time, when Buddhism became the state religion of Aryāvarta, that the Sangha began to enlist the painter and sculptor into its service. The earliest Buddhist ritual was of a strictly Puritan character, for the Buddha's teaching was a protest against the extravagance of Brahmanical sacrifices. Music, painting and sculpture were to be regarded as worldly snares which diverted the mind of the novitiate from the contemplation of the Four Aryan Truths: firstly, that suffering is in-

Plate Ia



STŪPA AT BEDSĀ

Plate Ib



STŪPA AT BHĀJĀ

separable from life; secondly, that desire—the thirst for pleasures, being, and power—is the cause of suffering; thirdly, that suffering can be suppressed; fourthly, that the Eightfold Path is the way which leads to the extinction of suffering. While, therefore, the stūpa which contained the holy relics, or symbols, had to be built strongly and well, it was not until later times that the artist and craftsman, as such, were admitted into the Order of monkhood.

Even during Asoka's reign the craftsmanship of the chapter-house which contained the stūpa, and the stūpa itself, was studiously primitive, reflecting the strict asceticism of the Buddha's original doctrine. In the rock-cut monasteries at Ajantā, where there is a progressive series illustrating the development of Buddhist art from about the second century B.C. to the seventh century or later, the early ones are oriented towards the north, instead of towards the rising or setting sun, the columns are plain, without caps or bases; and the law of the Buddha, which limited the decoration of monasteries to designs of "wreaths and creepers, and bone-hooks and cupboards," and forbade "imaginative drawings, painted in figures of men and women,"[1] was strictly observed.

At Bhājā, a place in the Western Ghāts of the Bombay presidency, not far from the great Kārlē chaītya house, there is a series of monolithic stūpas carved out of a scarp of rock which also contains an early Buddhist rock-cut monastery. The stūpas are inscribed with the names of the Theras, or Brethren, to whom they were dedicated, probably the abbots of the monastery.

They closely resemble the representations of stūpas carved upon the gateways of Sānchī. Though later

[1] Chullavagga vi. 3, 2.

than Asoka's time, they will serve to illustrate the form which the Aryan royal tomb assumed at the beginning of the Buddhist era.

The dome—the *aṇḍa*, or egg—which was regarded as a symbol of the universal dome or cosmos—is raised on a high plinth. In a structural stūpa there would have been two procession paths, one at the base of the dome in close proximity to the holy relics, and another at the ground level. This is the case at Sānchī, but here the rail enclosing the procession path is only carved as an ornamental band. The dome has become slightly bulbous in shape, a later development of the hemispherical stūpa. The railing round the actual procession path at the ground level, if there was one, was probably of wood, for this was a transition period when lithic forms were often combined with their wooden prototypes. In all the stūpas the symbol of royalty, the umbrella, which crowned them, is missing; and in most cases the relic casket, or harmīkā, which served as a pedestal for it, has been destroyed, but in the nearest stūpa in Pl. I, fig. B, the harmīkā is intact. This is a very elaborate one; the simpler and earlier type shown in fig. A is from a stūpa in the chaītya hall at Bedsā in the same neighbourhood. The vedikā railing which surrounded the relic casket is represented as an ornament: above this is a series of slabs placed one over the other, and gradually increasing in size, so as to form a kind of altar. The top is shown to be enclosed by another railing in the middle of which the shaft of the umbrella was fixed.

The same peculiar form is carved at Kārlē, and in many other early Buddhist chaītya halls, as a throne or platform for the Devas, who are seated on the capitals of the pillars enclosing the Chapter-house of the Order. Its connection with Vedic ritual can be traced in the

Vājapūja sacrifice, performed by Aryan householders for obtaining worldly advancement. At the conclusion of the sacrifice the householder, after a dialogue with his wife referring to their attainment to the higher spiritual spheres, mounted the sacrificial post and seated himself on the top, upon which seventeen robes were spread. When he came down he was enthroned and consecrated as a Samrāj, or universal monarch.[1] Evidently the structure above the relic casket on the stūpa is such a symbolic altar throne.

The arched ornament resembling a horse-shoe on the Bhāja relic casket represents the gable of the curved roof of a shrine through which the light fell upon the altar. It occurs in nearly all the buildings represented in the Bharhut or Sānchī sculptures. No doubt similar roofs and similar shrines were common in pre-Buddhist times, and the gradual adaptation of the form as an emblem of the rising or setting sun must have been a survival of Vedic symbolism. At first the imitation of the roof-end is very close, though no one familiar with Indian ways of thinking would believe that the whole intention of the sculptor lay in copying the form of a roof. He, no doubt, was thinking of the sun- or moon-light streaming in through the lattice-work which filled the upper part of the arch, and of the face of the sun or moon, which on certain holy days looked in at the window. Successive generations of craftsmen put the thought into symbolic form.

In the later monasteries at Ajantā an image of the Buddha as the Light of the world sometimes fills the

[1] See Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, pp. 166–7. In the same rite a wheel was set up upon a post and turned by a Brahman while a symbolic chariot race was being run.

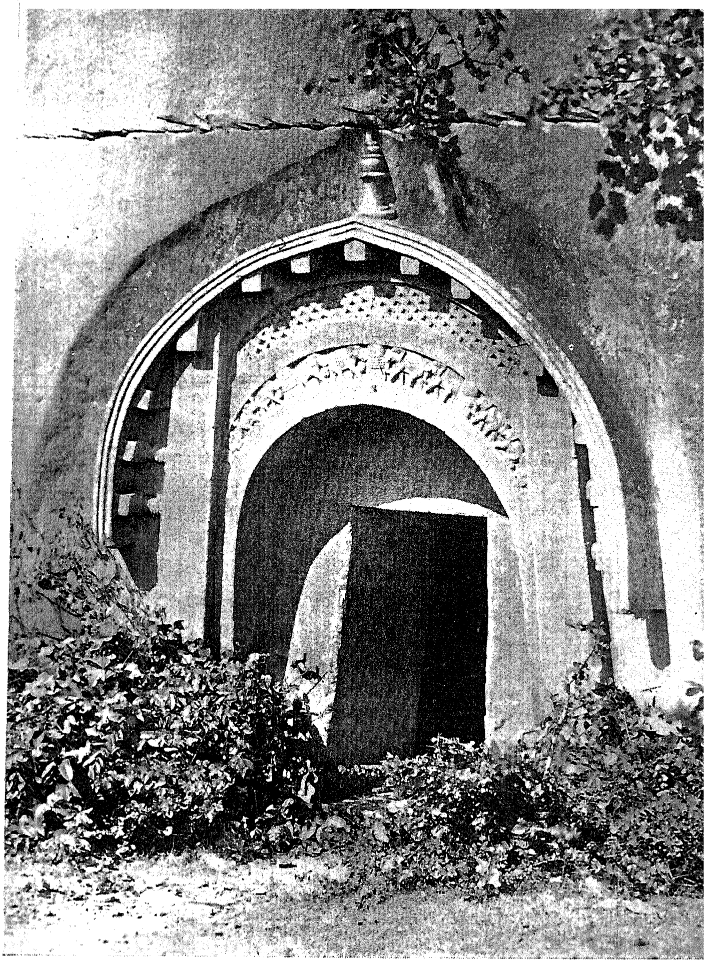
window space, and the arch then serves as the glory or aura of the image. And when the chaītya hall turned towards the west, the crocodile-dragon of Varuna, the ruler of the cosmic ocean into which the sun sinks every evening, was carved at the springing of the arch,[1] and a lion's or dragon's mask, with gaping mouth as if swallowing the whole arch, was carved at the crown.

But in the earliest rock-cut Assembly halls of the Buddhist monasteries, where this arch is the main *motif* of the severely restrained decorative scheme, one can hardly realise the symbolism behind it, for it is simply a copy of the window over the entrance. And certainly the rules of the Sangha did not tolerate any traffic with the despised Vedic fire-worshippers. They only prescribed the patterns which were lawful for the *bhikkus* to use as decorations, and gave them a metaphorical interpretation in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

The carved entrance to one of the rock-cut hermitages in Bihar, near Gāyā, known as the Lomas Rishi cave, is an exact reproduction of the roof-end from which the sun-window is derived. The hermitage was one of those which were dedicated by Asoka for the use of a certain sect known as the Ājivikas, and dates from about 257 B.C. The interior consists of a hall 33 feet long and 19 feet wide, with a semi-cylindrical roof. The walls, floor, and ceiling are quite plain, but have a very fine polish. At one end of the hall a narrow door opens into a domed chamber, or shrine, nearly circular in shape, like a hollow stūpa. In a similar adjacent hermitage, known as the Sudāma or Nyagrodha cave, the rock is cut over the entrance so as to

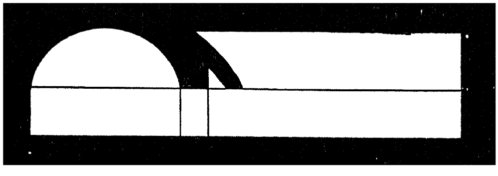
1 Horus, the Egyptian sun-god, was also represented in conflict with the crocodile-dragon.

PLATE IIA



LOMAS-RISHI CAVE ENTRANCE

PLATE IIB



SUDĀMA CAVE (LONGITUDINAL SECTION)

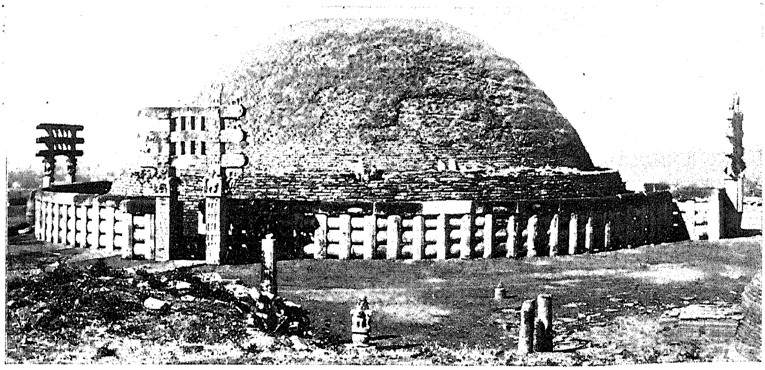
simulate the thatched roof of the shrine or stūpa (Pl. II, B). Possibly we have here a representation of an ancient Aryan stūpa with the assembly-hall or chapel where the *shrāddha* rites of the deceased hero were performed.

CHAPTER III

STŪPAS AT SĀNCHĪ, BHARHUT, AND AMARĀVATI

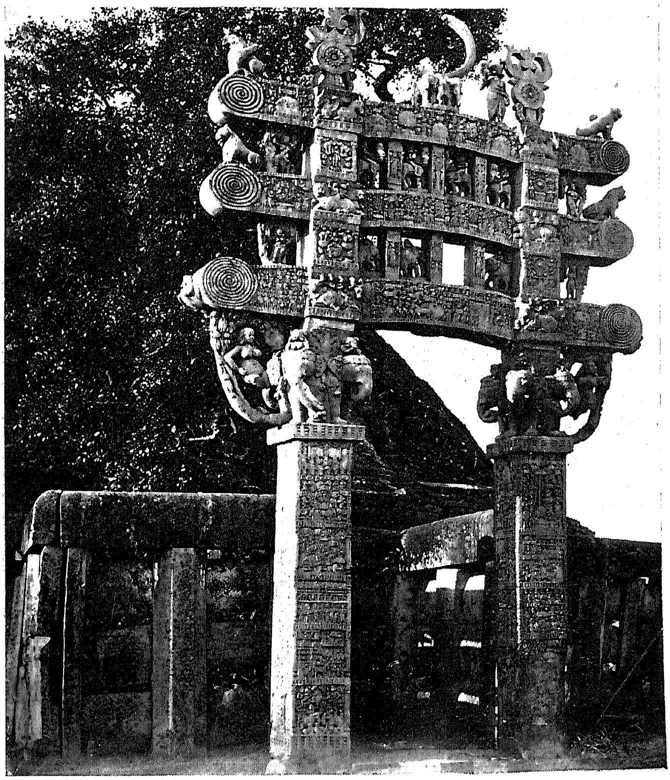
It will be understood from the preceding chapters that, though the earliest Vedic hymns may give the impression that the ancient Aryans in India knew little of the art of the city-builder, this is a very one-sided view of their history. The ritual of the Vedas was principally concerned with the Nature-spirits to which its prayers were addressed—with the animals offered in sacrifice, and the life of the farmstead which reared them. We must turn to the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana, with their vivid pictures of ancient Indian cities, to realise the civic side of Indo-Aryan life. Connecting these with the technical conditions already described, and with the known history of the Aryan people in Mesopotamia, the comparatively high development in which Indo-Aryan art is found in the earliest existing monuments will not appear surprising, but the natural outcome of the conditions which produced it. Before Mesopotamian history was made known by archæological research, it was assumed that the Aryan immigrations into India came exclusively through the passes of the Himālayas. But India was more accessible to the Aryans in Mesopotamia than it was to their brothers in Iran. The Sānchī and Bharhut sculptures give clear evidence of the contact of the Indo-Aryans with Egypt, Assyria,

PLATE IIIA



SĀNCHĪ STŪPA, GENERAL VIEW

PLATE IIIB



SĀNCHĪ STŪPA, NORTHERN GATEWAY

and Babylonia, which was especially close in the six centuries from 1746 B.C.

The great stūpa at Sānchī is one of a group situated in the Bhopāl State a few miles from Bhilsā, near which stood the famous city of Vidisha,[1] the capital of Eastern Mālwā. It is built upon a hill which in pre-Buddhist times may have been the site of Aryan Vedic rites, which gave to it the odour of sanctity, for it is not known to be in any way connected with the life of Buddha. Many stūpas of the Aryan princes of Mālwā may have preceded that which was dedicated to the memory of the royal Monk of Kapilavastu. A Buddhist monastery was built upon the hill in Asoka's time, and enjoyed a share of the lavish state patronage which the great emperor bestowed upon the Sangha. When the Mauryan dynasty came to an end, about 185 B.C., and for many centuries after that time, Sānchī continued to be the chief seat of Buddhist learning in Mālwā, a university for the royal city of Vidisha, so that the monuments which remain on the hill illustrate the development of Indian art from about the middle of the third century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D.

The brick stūpa which Asoka, or his viceroy, built for the monks is not now visible, for in the last half of the second century B.C. it was covered by a casing of rubble and fine masonry. The diameter of the stūpa was thus increased to about 120 feet, and the height to about 54 feet, the hill itself providing the excellent sandstone used by the royal craftsmen. Two procession paths for circumambulation were built round the base of the dome; one at a high level which was approached by a double staircase on the southern side, and another at the ground level. Both of them, as

[1] The modern Besnagar.

well as the staircase, were enclosed by the usual vedikā, or sacrificial railing. From the numerous names of donors inscribed upon the posts, cross-bars, and coping, it would seem likely that the whole of the original railing was of wood, the change to stone taking place gradually in the course of many years as pious laymen sought to win merit for themselves by rebuilding a section of it in the more costly and permanent material. This would account for the exact imitation of the wooden structure by the stone-masons. It was not because they were unpractised in the use of stone, but because they wished to avoid a break in the railing, and to maintain the sacred associations of the old wooden work.[1]

The railing enclosing the principal or lower procession path stands open at the cardinal points—the four "doors" of the sky—and over each entrance is raised a lofty torana, or triumphal arch (Pl. III, B), reproducing in sculptured stone the massive timber structure which Indian sculptors represent as the gate of Prince Siddhartha's palace at Kapilavastu. The original torana was probably of plain timber-work like the railings, the present gates having been put up about the first century A.D., or about three centuries later than Asoka's original stūpa. Like the railings, different sections of them were votive offerings. Thus one part of the southern gateway was a gift of the son of the chief craftsman of Rāja Sīri-Sātakani, one of the kings of the Andhra dynasty, *circ.* 179 B.C. Another part was given by the ivory-carvers of Vidisha.

[1] The peculiar form of the horizontal bars of the railing, and the manner in which they are mortised into the uprights (see Pl. IV, A), suggest the craftsmanship of wheelwrights, who as makers of the Aryan war-chariots are often mentioned with honour in the Vedic hymns. Probably they were the craftsmen who made the vedikā and constructed the tabernacles for the Aryan tribal sacrifices.

In the present state of the stūpa these splendidly sculptured toranas contrast almost too strongly with the severe simplicity of the rest of the stūpa; but this was hardly the case when they were put up, for the whole of the dome of the stūpa was plastered, and no doubt finished with a fine surface to receive the fresco paintings by which the lay community were instructed in Buddhist doctrine and in sacred history as they processed round the dome which enshrined the holy relics. It is highly probable that the sculptures of the gateways were also finished with a fine coat of white stucco and painted. This was certainly the case with similar sculptures at Amarāvatī, and was the usual practice in India. These sculptures do not represent the beginnings of Indian art. There is a long history behind them, stretching back to the time when Aryan kings ruled in Babylon, and when the painter instead of the sculptor recorded the deeds of Aryan heroes. Buddhism did not originate the art of Sānchī and Bharhut any more than it created the wealth which Asoka and his successors lavished upon the Buddhist Order. The Buddha himself renounced the world and all its vanities, but the spiritual Sangha which he founded appropriated, for the purpose of its propaganda, the artistic heritage of the Aryan people in India.

Of the four gates of the stūpa, the southern one faced the steps ascending to the upper procession path, and thus was the exit for those who had finished the ritual of "turning the Wheel of the Law." When a stūpa had only one entrance, as is the case with the smaller stūpa No. 3, which adjoins the Great Stūpa, it was placed on the south. Probably this was invariably the case.[1]

[1] The question of orientation is a most important one for the understanding of the principles of Indian temple architecture and iconography.

The reason is to be found in the Vedic tradition which was followed by Buddhist builders. In Vedic ritual the solar year was said to have two courses (*ayanas*), the northern course comprising the spring and summer, when the sun passes from south to north of the Equator, and the southern course when the year begins to wane as the sun appears to move towards the south.[1] The south, therefore, was the abode of the spirits of the dead, and the stūpa had its exit on the south, so that its ghostly inhabitant might pass through on its way to its final abode. For this reason we may conclude that the southern gateway of the Great Stūpa was the earliest one.

The northern one, however, is now the most complete, and on the whole the finest as a work of art, particularly with regard to the elephant capitals, which are much happier in composition and more structurally appropriate than the lions of the southern gateway, reproducing the capital of the imperial standard which Asoka placed at the entrance. It would seem as if the northern gateway was designed throughout and carefully supervised by one master-mason, while the others were, as the inscriptions testify, the joint gift of several donors, and evidently carried out in sections by different groups of craftsmen working independently. In these gateways, therefore, there is a tendency to

The first care of the Indian temple-builder is to determine the orientation of the shrine in relation to that aspect of the deity which is to be worshipped. By the careful collection of data on the spot, it would be possible to establish a scientific classification of Indian temple architecture based upon Indian principles, and to throw much light on the history of Indian religious ritual. But Fergusson hardly alludes to the subject. His *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, and the official archæological reports and plans, only occasionally indicate the orientation of a building, so that the material they provide for the study of the subject is most meagre.

[1] See Barnett's *Antiquities of India*, p. 203.

PLATE IVA



SĀNCHĪ STŪPA, PROCESSION PATH

PLATE IVB



MĀYĀ, THE MOTHER OF THE BUDDHA

patchwork which is not shown in the northern one. In plastic design the latter shows the Indian craftsman at his best. The play of light and shade on the different planes of relief is contrived with so masterly a touch that the extreme richness of the ornamentation, worked out with an unerring decorative instinct, does not approach the insipid, as is the case with Indian art in its decadence. Nor does the presence of Assyrian and other West Asian motives suggest the handiwork of imported craftsmen; they are reminiscences of Indo-Aryan history, a part of the material which the royal craftsmen of Vidisha inherited from previous generations, and had long since made their own. The art of Sānchī on the whole is wonderfully strong, fresh, and original. It shows no more trace of foreign tutelage than any of the Western schools—for artists of all countries borrow from each other and inherit ideas from the past.

The sculptures of the gateways fall into two main categories—those which are structural or heraldic, and a series of pictures in stone illustrating the story of the Blessed One for the edification of pilgrims. The former are cut with the greatest freedom and sureness of touch, a proof that the sculptor's art had a long tradition behind it when the gateways were put up. The latter, especially the earlier ones, are influenced by the technique of the painter, and were probably finished in fresco colours laid upon a ground of fine chunam. Like the structural details, they evidence great skill in plastic technique; but the mannerisms of primitive art are not entirely shaken off.

Crowning the centre of the gateway on the middle of the curved transom, which is framed into the two principal uprights as in timber-work, stands the broken

fragment of the Wheel of the Law supported by a group of admirably carved elephants. One of the two attendants standing by the side bearing the royal insignia, a yak-tail fly-flap, is intact.

The symbol which crowns the two upright supports of the gateway has been identified by M. Foucher as the *nandi-pada*, or zodiacal sign of Taurus the Bull, which is said to have presided over the birth of the Buddha on the day of the full moon in the month of Vaiçākha (April—May). The simplest form of the sign is a circle surmounted by a crescent, representing both the sun and the moon, and also two of the Aryan warrior's favourite weapons, the discus and the bow. The association of the sign of Taurus with the birth of the Blessed One points back to remote Babylonian times, when the Bull was the first sign of the zodiac and marked the beginning of the solar year. The old-world legend that humanity was born under the sign of Taurus perhaps fixed the appropriate time for the celebration of the Buddha's birthday. This festival of the Buddhist Church was probably, like the symbol itself, borrowed from Vedic ritual. The day of the full moon was one of those in which *shrāddha* worship was paid to deceased ancestors, and the appearance of the symbol on the gate of the stūpa seems to be a reminiscence of the ancient Chandra worship.[1] Here, as in later Buddhist monuments, a central point has been added to the crescent to indicate perhaps the *tri-ratna*, or three jewels, the Buddha, the Law, and the Sangha ; for similar symbols very frequently have a different signification according to the age to which they belong. The symbols of

[1] It was the rule of the Buddhist *bhikkus* to meet on the nights of the new and full moon for a special service in which the rules of the Order and confessional forms were recited.

PLATE VA



PLATE VB

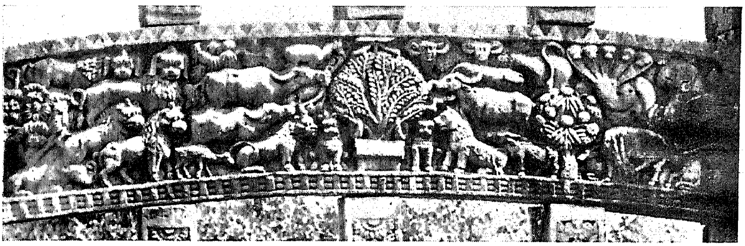


PLATE VC

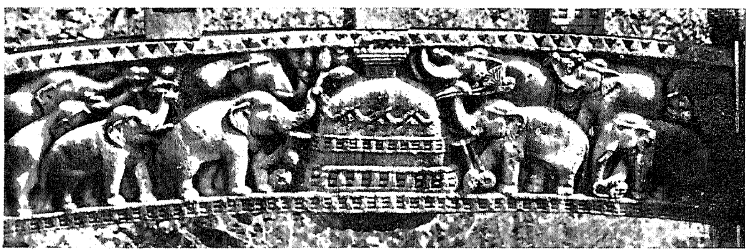


PLATE VD



RELIEFS FROM THE SĀNCHĪ GATEWAYS

Buddhism were not Buddhist inventions, but the common property of all Indo-Aryan religion.

This interchange of symbolism is also seen in the various panels representing Māyā, the mother of the Buddha, seated or standing upon a lotus flower springing from a vase, while on either side above her an elephant bathes her from a vase held in its trunk (Pl. IV, B). No doubt, as M. Foucher says, this was meant by the sculptor to symbolise the Nativity of the Blessed One. But to many generations of artists before the Buddha's time, it had meant the miraculous birth witnessed every morning when Ushas rose from the cosmic ocean, and the mystic Brahmā lotus, the Creator's throne, unfolded its rosy petals. Ushas was the celestial maiden who opened the doors of the sky and was bathed by Indra's elephants, the rain-clouds. In Buddhist times the meaning of the myth is changed. Brahmā is dethroned and Ushas becomes the mother of the Blessed One under the name of Mahā Māyā—the Great Illusion, the cause of pain and sorrow, from which the Buddha showed the way of escape. In later Indian art she is Lakshmi, the bright goddess of the day, greeting her consort Vishnu, the Preserver, as he rises victorious from his conflict with the spirits of darkness, and bringing with her the nectar of immortality churned from the cosmic ocean (Pl. LXIII, A).[1]

The meaning of the hieroglyphic language in which Buddhist legends were told or doctrine expounded by the Sānchī sculptors has been made clear by M. Foucher's brilliant researches. The subjects of the long panels on the front and back of the three transoms of all the gateways are partly taken from the Indian storyteller's jungle book, the *jātakas*, partly from the events of the Buddha's last incarnation, and partly from the

[1] See below, pp. 168-72.

history of Asoka's reign. Except that the subject of the seven Buddhas—the six Buddhas of the past and Gautama himself—appears on the top transom in all four, the distribution of the narrative over the different gateways does not seem to follow a definite scheme, perhaps because in the original plan the stūpa had only one entrance. As the devout Buddhist at that time was not allowed to represent the Buddha himself—a rule quite in keeping with the spirit of the Upanishads—he was compelled to use certain ideographs by which the appearance of the Blessed One in the picture was to be understood. The Nativity in the Lumbīnī gardens was represented, as we have seen by the figure of Mahā Māyā and the lotus springing from the golden vase, or sometimes by the lotus and vase only (Pl. IV, B). A throne beneath an *ashvattha*, or pipal tree, or the tree alone, stood for the enlightenment at Bodh-Gāyā, or for the Buddha himself. The wheel was the symbol of the Buddha's first sermon at Benares; and the death, or Pari-Nirvāna, at Kusināgara was represented by the stūpa. The Buddhas of the past were also represented by stūpas or by their especial trees under which they attained to Nirvāna.

One of the most attractive of the *jātaka* panels is that which tells, for the edification of jealous wives, the story of the six-tusked elephant, the Buddha in a previous existence. How he was the chief of a great herd of elephants, and had two wives, one of whom, in a fit of jealousy, prayed that she might be re-born as the Queen of Benares, so that she might revenge herself upon her lord. Her prayer was heard, and in due time she sent, with the king's permission, one of the royal huntsmen to shoot the great elephant, and bring back the six tusks as proof of his success. The huntsman, disguised in the yellow robes of an ascetic, wounded

PLATE VIA



THE FOREST SPIRIT, SĀNCHĪ

PLATE VIB



THE LOTUS AND LION PILLAR
OF THE LAW, SĀNCHĪ

the Bodhīsattva with a poisoned arrow. Reflecting that by self-sacrifice he might gain a step towards the attainment of perfect knowledge, the wise beast assisted the hunter in sawing off the six tusks, and died before his companions came to the spot. The Queen, when she received the trophies, was struck by remorse, and likewise died. The elephant in another birth became the Buddha, and the jealous Queen attained peace of mind as one of the sisters of the Order.

In their illustrations of these jungle stories, dear to the Indian villager, the Buddhist sculptors testify to that intense lōve of the forest wild, and intimate knowledge of the life of its denizens, which are so conspicuous in Indian poetry and literature. Pl. V, A, gives the panel of the middle transom of the south gateway. On the left the King of the Elephants, the Bodhīsattva, is cooling himself in a lotus pool in the forest surrounded by the rest of the herd, two of whom hold the insignia of royalty over his head. On the right he is shown, together with his attendants, promenading in the jungle in royal state, knowing full well that the huntsman concealed behind a tree is preparing the deadly arrow. The subject is repeated on the northern and western gateways ; in the latter case the smoother and less vigorous technique suggests that the ivory-carvers who executed some of the panels of the south gateway also had a hand in parts of the western torana.

The Sānchī sculptures also show the derivation of that great school of Buddhist sculpture which, after being transplanted to Amarāvatī at the mouth of the Krishna river and to Ceylon, finally took root in Java, and in the sixth century blossomed into the splendid reliefs of the great Borobūdūr stūpa. Besides similarities in the grouping of figures, there is, in the expressive

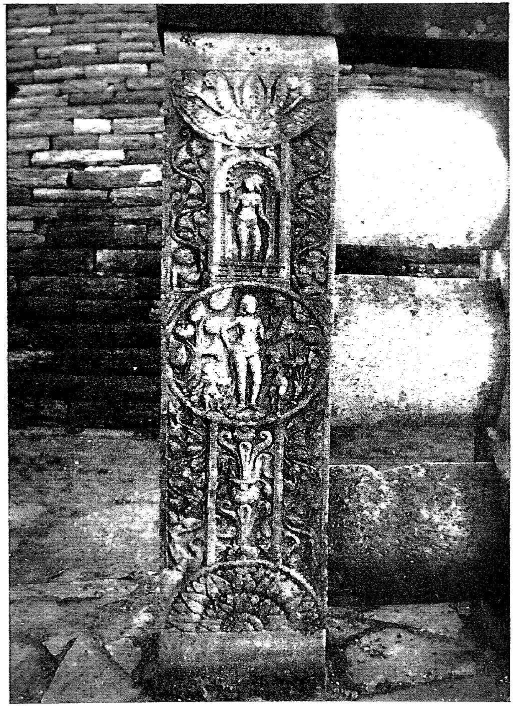
movement and vivid style of narrative, intense religious feeling, joined with a wonderful instinct for decorative design, much affinity with Sānchī art and the art of Borobūdūr. Here also one can trace some of the roots of the school of Ajantā painting. The treatment of the lotus, the favourite flower of the Indian artist, is precisely similar to that found at Ajantā, making allowances for the different technique of the sculptor and painter (Pl. VII).

And since so much attention has been given by orientalists to the influence of the Hellenistic school of Gandhāra upon Indian figure sculpture, it is important to observe that in the Sānchī school, which certainly owed nothing to Gandhāra, there are a few figures in the round executed with as much understanding of the human form as the best of the Græco-Buddhist sculptures. The robust young damsel with arms and legs overweighted with ornaments who appears on the Sānchī gateways as a wood-nymph hanging on to the boughs of a mango-tree may seem less graceful and refined than the Dryad of pure Greek art, though the primeval forest might know this rustic beauty better than the elegant town-bred maid of Athens.

But few artists would assert that the sculptor who created this vigorously drawn and admirably modelled figure had anything to learn from the academic technique of the Gandhāra school. Dr. Vincent Smith, in order to prove foreign influences in Hindu art, illustrates[1] an example of decadent Hellenistic sculpture of the so-called Copto-Alexandrian school, and suggests that the motive may have found its way into Indian art by the transference of Alexandrian ideas. No one can say when or where the idea originated—it might have been in the Garden of Eden. But it is

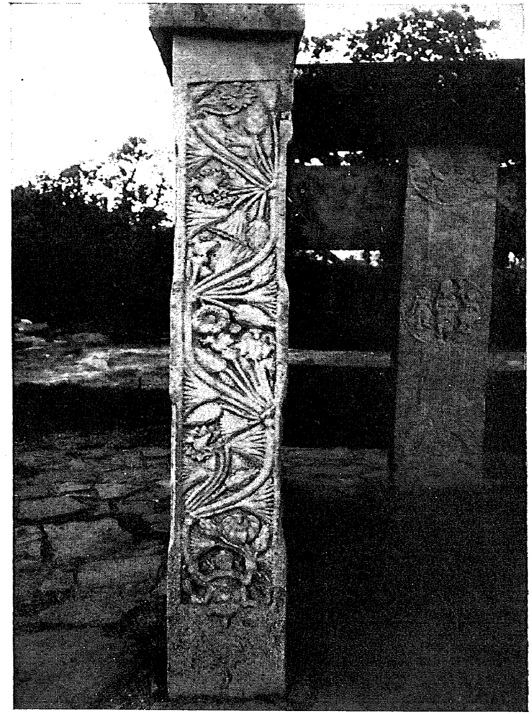
[1] *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, Pl. LXXXVI.

Plate VIIa



RAILING OF STŪPA NO. II, SĀNCHĪ

Plate VIIb



RAILING OF STŪPA NO. II, SĀNCHĪ

quite possible that the occurrence of the motive at Sānchī and Mathurā may be partly the result of Aryan contact in ancient times with Egyptian and Babylonian civilisation. However, it would be difficult to find in early Western art any examples of the "woman-and-tree" motive which show as much freshness, plastic strength and decorative beauty as this sprightly Indian wood-nymph.

But though this contact with Mesopotamia and Egypt explains many of the foreign elements in early Indian art, the Sānchī sculptures are best understood as a vivid artistic commentary on the life and thought of Vedic India. This Indian Dryad, associated by Buddhist sculptors with Māyā, the mother of the Blessed One, is sung in the Rig-Veda [1] as Araṇyānī, the elusive Spirit of the Forest, a goddess of plenty, who opened freely her bounteous store to the villager, always kindly and gracious to man, though her children, the wild beasts, were to be feared:

> Arayṇānī! Araṇyānī! Ere you vanish from our sight, will you not to the village? You are not afraid?
> When the bull bellows the cicada replies, dancing to his cymbals. Araṇyānī then rejoices.
>
> In the fading twilight cattle grazing and cottages loom dimly: Araṇyānī then sends home her creaking carts.
> One man calls his cow. Another fells a tree: a loiterer in the forest fancies he hears a scream.
>
> Though the fierce beasts may kill us, Araṇyānī does no harm. Let us feast on her sweet fruits and rest there at our will.
> Praise be to Araṇyānī, Mother of forest beasts! Musk-scented, fragrant, bountiful of food—though no peasants till her soil.

The Vedic Rishi dwelling in the forest aṣram could tame the fiercest of Araṇyānī's offspring. At Sānchī we see them flocking together to join in worship at

[1] X, 146.

the cenotaph and bodhi-tree of the great Rishi who taught the universal Law of Life (Pl. V).

It is impossible in this work to give an adequate impression of the richness, beauty, and variety of Sānchī sculpture: some of it is primitive and archaic, some—like the reliefs (Pl. VII) on the rail of the stūpa No. II, built on the western slope of the hill—are as cultured in design and accomplished in technique as Italian Cinquecento work. These reliefs resemble very closely the work of the Amarāvatī stūpa, the remains of which are now divided between the Madras Museum and the British Museum.

The bas-reliefs of Amarāvatī (Pl. VIII), forming the decoration of the railing and of the marble casing of the stūpa itself, should properly be studied in connection with the fresco paintings of Ajantā. They must have resembled the latter very closely when the colour and gilding with which they were finished were intact; the technical treatment also is usually much more pictorial than plastic. A good artistic monograph on these superb fragments would be of great value in filling up the hiatus in Indian art history which has been made by the almost complete ruin of the early pictorial record, but this goes beyond the scope of the present handbook.

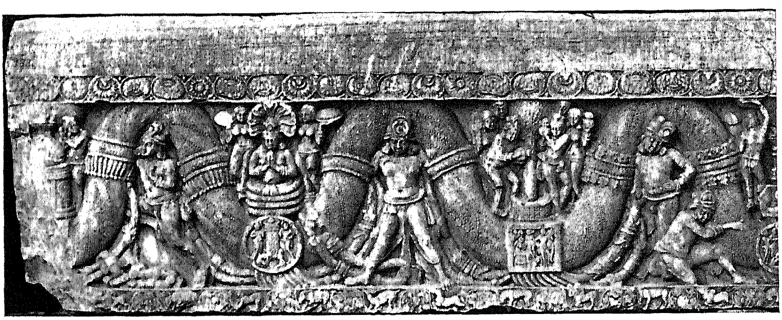
At Sānchī, as at Amarāvatī and elsewhere, there are many evidences of the cosmopolitan life of the ancient capitals of India, which must have been hardly less striking than it appears at Calcutta and Bombay in the present day. But nevertheless the dominating influence in Sānchī sculpture is not foreign, but Indian or Indo-Aryan, for here one can see how perfectly the Aryan culture of Vedic times had adapted itself to its Indian environment, and learnt to penetrate with true artistic insight into the exuberant life of Indian nature.

PLATE VIIIA



TRANSLATION OF THE BUDDHA'S BOWL

PLATE VIIIB



COPING STONE, AMARĀVATĪ

The Sānchī and Amarāvatī artists were no copyists or scholiasts; they drank at the same fountain as the great masters of Hellas, though, like the latter, they were heirs to a craft tradition of many centuries. It was the Indian environment which gave Indo-Aryan art its special character and differentiated it from the art of Greece.

CHAPTER IV

ASOKAN PILLARS AND THE "BELL-SHAPED" OR LOTUS CAPITAL

NEAR the southern gateway of the Great Stūpa the Emperor Asoka put up a pillar carved in stone, and inscribed with one of his famous edicts with which he propagated Buddhist teaching or issued orders relating to the conduct of the Sangha. The pillar when intact, says Sir John Marshall, was about 42 feet in height, and consisted of a round and slightly tapering monolithic shaft, with bell-shaped capital surmounted by an abacus and a crowning ornament of four lions set back to back, the whole finely finished and polished to a remarkable lustre from top to bottom.[1]

The same high authority, in common with Fergusson, maintains that the "bell-shaped" capital was evolved in Persia. "It was from Persian originals, specimens of which are still extant in the plains of the Murghab, at Istakhr, Natesh-i-Rustam, and Persepolis, that the smooth unfluted shafts of the Mauryan columns were copied." It may be granted that the craftsmen who executed this and other Asokan columns were in all probability skilled Persian masons attracted to Asoka's court by the fame of the great emperor. But that Asoka's imperial ensign was a mere copy of Persepolitan pillars is not in the least likely. Asoka was not a parvenu monarch constrained to borrow

[1] *Guide to Sānchī*, p. 91.

his heraldic devices from others of more aristocratic lineage. The Indo-Aryan clan of which he was the chief had traditions at least as old as those of the Persian kings, and the craftsmen of the imperial court at Pātaliputra, whether Greeks, Persians, or Indians, would have had to adapt their ideas to these traditions. The constant recurrence of the "bell-shaped" capital in all the earliest Indian sculpture shows that it was the usual architectural form in Asoka's time; it had doubtless been carved in wood by the royal craftsmen of India for many generations previously. The reason for Asoka's preference for Persian craftsmen is disclosed in the inscription on the Sānchī column. They were highly skilled stone-masons, and Asoka desired that his edicts should remain in force "as long as my sons and great-grandsons may reign, and as long as the Moon and the Sun shall endure."

Moreover, the Bharhut and Sānchī sculptures show us that the symbolism of Asoka's pillars has nothing to do with a bell, but is an adaptation to structural purposes of the same lotus-and-vase motive which, with a different implication, served for a symbol of the Buddha's nativity. Here, however, it is the blue lotus, Vishnu's flower, which is used instead of the pink Brahmā lotus.

At the eastern gateway of Bharhut one of the Lokapālas, or Guardians of the Four Gateways of the Sky, is shown carrying the "bell-shaped" standard, surmounted not by lions, but by Garuda, the eagle of Vishnu, the Sun-god, who has for his emblem the blue lotus.

The lotus throne of the Buddha is nearly always represented in Indian art with the outer fringe of petals turned downwards, and the whole flower is frequently shown naturalistically. with the petals turned down

upon the stalk in a form closely resembling the so-called bell of the Asokan capitals. At Bharhut and at Sānchī the petals and stamens of the flower are often carefully carved upon the so-called "bell-capital," and the shaft of the pillar is fixed in a water vase which forms its base, as is the case at Kārlē (Pl. IX, A). The representation of the complete Asokan standard, carved in relief on one of the Sānchī railings, shows two lotus buds springing from under the abacus of the capital, a decisive proof that the "bell" represented the turned-down petals of the flower (see Pl. VI, B). The ovolo moulding above the "bell" evidently represents the melon-shaped fruit of the blue lotus (*Nymphæa cærulea*).

It was natural that the lotus, the especial flower of the gods and the favourite of Indian poets, should have been adapted by Indian craftsmen as a *motif* for the decoration of pillars, as it was in Egypt. The Egyptians, however, used the bud or half-opened flower to form the capital of a pillar; the Indian craftsmen preferred the open flower with turned-down petals because it suggested to them the heavenly vault supported by the holy mountain, the pivot of the universe.

This "bell-shaped" capital, as Asoka's imperial ensign, was the symbol of universal sovereignty. Probably it was meant to apply to the Law of the Blessed One rather than to Asoka himself, for a section of the seed-vessel of *Nymphæa cærulea* is the Wheel of the Law which is here supported by four lions. The fact that a similar design was used for the standard of Vishnu, the Upholder of the Universe, shows that the idea was an old Indo-Aryan one, and not a newfangled notion imported by Persian sculptors of the period. Moreover, it is evident that, while the symbolism was perfectly understood by the royal craftsmen of India,

it was unfamiliar to Asoka's imported Perso-Greek or Baktrian masons. The former decorate the "bell" with the characteristic pointed petals of the flower, and indicate the stamens and seed-vessel clearly, while the latter change the shape of the seed-vessel and conventionalise the petals so that the resemblance to the lotus is almost lost. The Gandharam sculptors, equally unfamiliar with Indian symbolism, decorated the bell with acanthus leaves.

In Brahmanical symbolism the mystery of the sunrise is represented by the lotus[1] upon which Brahmā, the Creator, sits enthroned, springing from the navel of Nārāyana, the Eternal Spirit, who lies asleep at the bottom of the waters of chaos reposing in the coils of the world-serpent, Ananta, or the Milky Way (see Pl. LX, B). What this symbolism meant in Mahāyāna Buddhism is explained in the Tantra Tattva when it compares Prajnā-pāramita, Supreme Wisdom, to a lotus flower. "In the root she is all-Brahman; in stem she is all-Māyā (Illusion); in the flower she is all-world; and in the fruit all-liberation." Applying this to the pillars carved by the early Buddhist builders, who were carrying on the Indo-Aryan traditions from Vedic times, we can understand the ideas they meant to convey. The vase forming the base of the pillar stood for the cosmic waters,[2] "the all-Brahman"; the shaft was the stalk of the mystic flower—the unreality upon which the world-life was supported—the bell-shaped capital was the world itself enfolded by the petals of the sky; the fruit was *moksha*,

[1] In this case the pink lotus—the so-called sacred lotus of Egypt (*Nelumbium speciosum*)—Brahmā's especial flower.

[2] Very likely the vase originally had a practical purpose, to protect the end of a wooden post from damp or from the attacks of white ants: the symbolism of the craftsman was always based upon utilitarian purposes.

liberation, or Nirvāna, which was the goal of existence; the altar upon which the Devas were seated was the Tusitā heavens.

This symbolism is so characteristically Indian, and so widely diffused in early Buddhist art, that the mere coincidence of "bell-shaped" capitals occurring in Persia hardly justifies the name which archæologists have given them. Perhaps Persia borrowed the idea from India, the land of the lotus, together with the flower itself. But it is much more probable that it was evolved by the carvers of the sacrificial posts in Vedic times, when the Aryans occupied the valley of the Euphrates, and were in contact with Egypt and Assyria and with their relatives in Iran. Certainly the Apadāna of Persepolis was not an original creation, but, as M. E. Blochet says, "a compromise between the oldest works of Assyrian art and the most grandiose specimens of Greek architecture." Were it not that the palaces of the Aryan kings in Mesopotamia were built of sacrificial wood, we might yet discover there the prototype of the Persepolitan pillar.

The lotus-and-vase pillar, besides being one of the most ancient of Indian architectural orders, is also the most frequently used. It is found at all periods. It was adopted by the Græco-Roman builders of Gandhara as well as by the craftsmen of Muhammadan India. The Hindu master-builder of the present day continues to use it. This persistent survival is specially significant when it is seen that the most distinctive marks of Hellenistic craftsmanship, the honeysuckle pattern, the acanthus leaf and Corinthian capital which occur so frequently in Mauryan and Kushān times, did not survive in India for more than a few generations. These did not belong to the ritual of Buddhist craftsmanship, and were quickly discarded as meaning

less in Indian art. The "Persepolitan bell-shaped" capital survived, because it was not in Asoka's time a foreign importation, but an ancient Vedic symbol which had an established place in the ritual of Buddhism. The Manāsāra Silpa-Sāstra, quoted by Rām Rāz in his Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus, shows that the form of the Hindu temple pillar had a ritualistic significance, just as was the case with the different shapes of altars in Vedic ritual. Thus a pillar with square shaft signified Brahmā-worship, an octagonal one Vishnu-worship, a sixteen-sided one Rudra- or Siva-worship; while the cylindrical pillar without capital or base belonged to Chandra-worship.

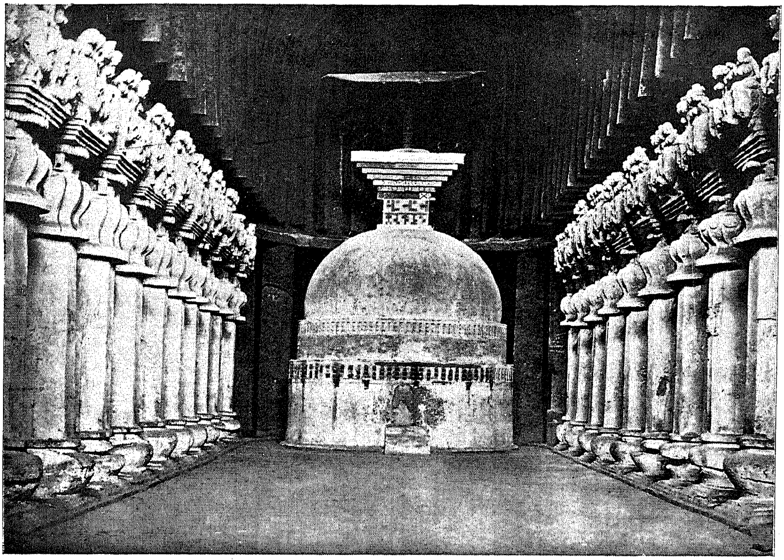
These different varieties of pillar shafts, with or without the lotus-and-vase embellishment, are to be found in the ruined temples on the Sānchī hill. Possibly, as suggested above, the plain cylindrical shafts of the Asokan pillars may be a reminiscence of the ancient Chandra-worship with which the stūpa was connected. According to Hieun Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India in the seventh century A.D., India was known as the Land of the Moon. The holy ground at Benares, contained by the river front and the Panch Kōsi Road, is crescent-shaped. The most sacred places both of Buddhist and Hindu India are those where a mountain torrent pours over a scarp of rock curved like the crescent moon on Siva's brow, reminding the pious pilgrim of the holy Ganges as she descends into the plains of India at Hardwar over Himālayan wooded precipices—the tangled locks of the Great Yogi of Kailāsa, who represents the Brahman ideal of the Enlightened One.

CHAPTER V

THE STŪPA-HOUSE, OR CHAPTER-HOUSE OF THE BUDDHIST ORDER

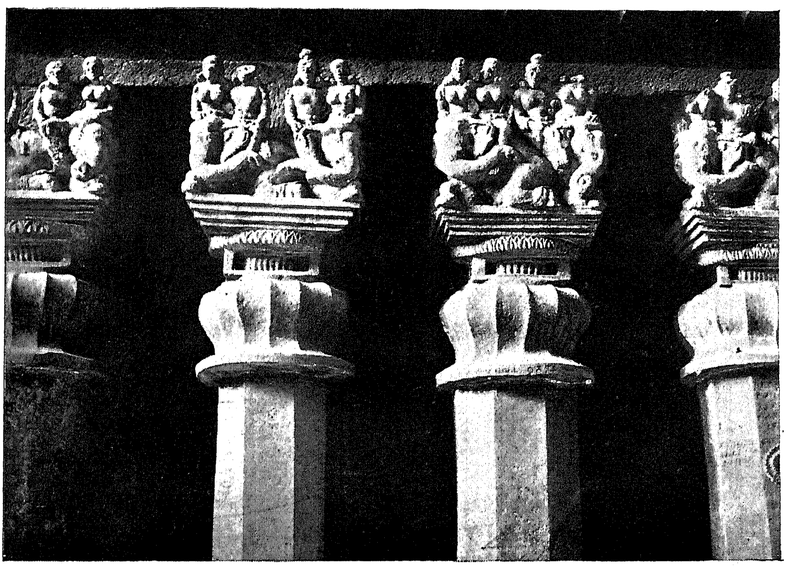
THE organisation of the primitive Buddhist Church, based upon the Sangha, or Assembly of the Aryan clan, required a meeting-place; this naturally would be attached to the relic shrine or stūpa of a Buddhist saint. The simple ritual of the Hīnayāna school only needed a thatched shed enclosing the stūpa, giving a sheltered place for the members of the Order where they could sit and meditate on the words of the Blessed One or settle the affairs of the monastery. A passage for circumambulation of the stūpa was also necessary. The lay community whose offerings contributed to the maintenance of the monastery were provided with a corridor on either side of the shelter where they could see the stūpa and circumambulate it without interfering with the service of the Sangha. This primitive type of Buddhist Church was apsidal at the further end, for the procession path followed the shape of the stūpa. It had three doors, the large one in the centre being the entrance to the Assembly-hall of the Sangha—the nave of the Church; the left one being the entrance, and the right one the exit for the procession path of the laymen. Plain wooden pillars slightly sloping inwards to resist the thrust of the barrel-shaped roof supported the latter and divided the nave from

PLATE IXA



THE STŪPA-HOUSE, KĀRLĒ

PLATE IXB



LOTUS CAPITALS, KĀRLĒ

the corridors or aisles. The nave was lighted and ventilated by the horse-shoe or sun-window over the main entrance, partially screened by a wooden trellis. This window, as mentioned above, was one of the most frequently used decorative motives in Buddhist art, because it was regarded as a symbol of the rising or setting sun, or of the moon, according to the orientation of the building to which it belonged.

We must not believe, however, that this stūpa-house, the Assembly-hall of the Sangha, was any more than the stūpa itself a creation of Buddhism, or that its primitiveness shows that the Indo-Aryans were little skilled in the art of building. It has been explained above that in all probability the stūpa-house, as a chapel for dead kings, had a long tradition behind it in the earliest days of Buddhism. Its structure was comparatively simple, because it was only intended to last for three generations, when the solemn Vedic rites by which the Brahman priests helped the deceased monarch's spirit on its way to *swarga* had fulfilled their purpose. For this reason no stūpas or stūpa-houses exist older than the third century B.C., when Asoka began to build solid stūpas of brick and stone, and provided the Sangha with permanent Assembly-halls, which might endure as long as the Moon and Sun. But though Asoka greatly increased the number of master-builders in the imperial service by the employment of foreigners, even he could not command sufficient labour for his colossal building projects,[1] so that the stūpa-houses of the Sangha continued for the most part to be built of wood and thatch. But it was in his reign that the royal craftsmen of India began the great series of rock-cut stūpa-houses and

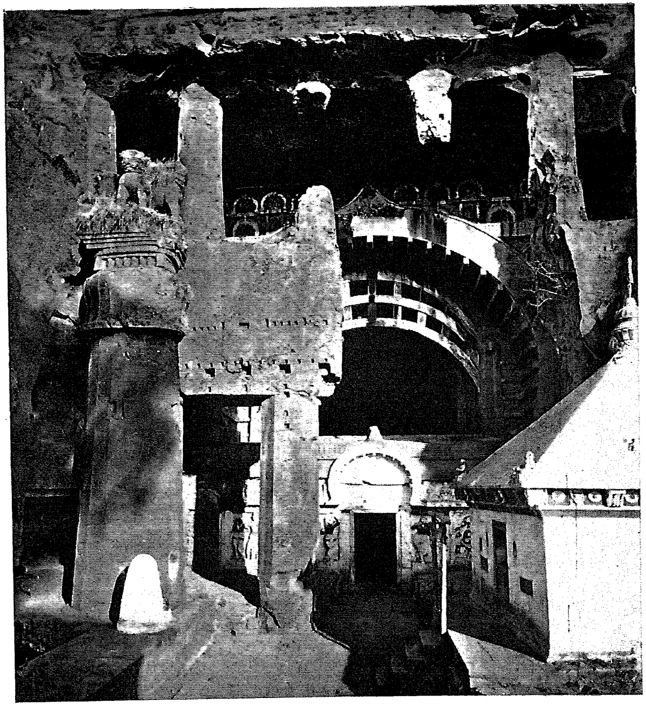
[1] Tradition says that he built 84,000 stūpas; the number may not be entirely fanciful if those built of impermanent materials are reckoned.

monasteries for which Kārlē, Nāsik, Kenheri, Ajantā, Ellora, and other places are famous.

The wandering *bhikkus*, whose duty it was to perpetuate the tradition of the Good Law taught by the Buddha, were enjoined to meet together in the rainy season, when travelling was difficult or impossible, for the purpose of comparing notes and discussing the affairs of the Sangha; a very necessary precaution, as the tradition, like that of orthodox Brahmanism, was an oral one transmitted from one generation to another, and depending for its accuracy upon a scientific system of memorising. The importance of these annual meetings was recognised by the rule of the Order that no *bhikku* was allowed to travel in the rainy season, except when news should come from a distant place that one of the brethren specially learned in the Law might die and leave no spiritual heir to carry on the great tradition.

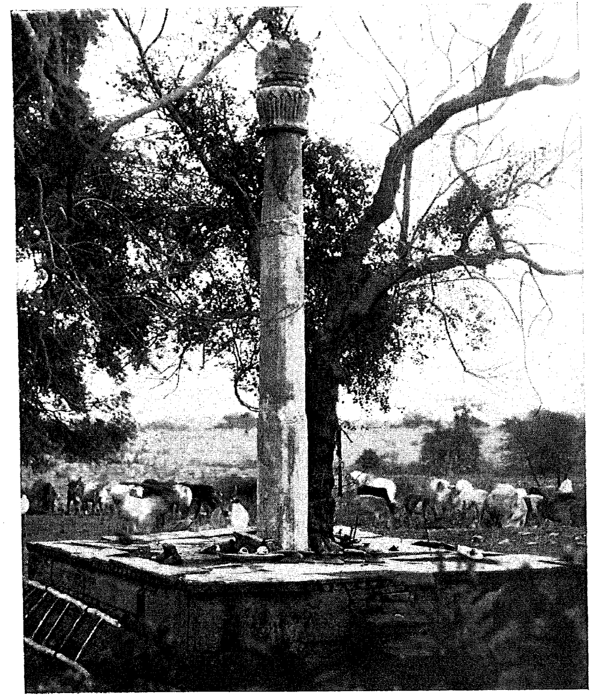
In the early days of Buddhism the retreats of the *bhikkus* were often natural caves in the ravine of a mountain torrent where the great Rishis who preceded the Enlightened One had sought, by meditation or painful mortification of the flesh, to find the true Path. When Asoka began to take the Sangha under his imperial patronage, and the number of *bhikkus* greatly increased, it became necessary to enlarge these ancient retreats of the Order, and to provide others in proximity to the royal courts, so that the sons of the Aryan nobility might benefit by the instruction of the *bhikkus*. When kings and emperors took the vows of the Order, and the abbots of the monasteries were treated as royal personages, it soon followed that the ritual of relic worship lost the austerity of the primitive Buddhist cult, and became as elaborate and ornate as the Vedic rites over which the ancient Aryan kings

PLATE XA



ENTRANCE PORCH, KĀRLĒ

PLATE XB



VISHNU PILLAR, BESNAGAR

had presided. The craftsmen at the different royal courts vied with each other in carving out of the living rock the most stately and lavishly decorated Assembly-halls, where the parliament of the Sangha met periodically to settle the spiritual affairs of the Indo-Aryan community, with a similar procedure to that of the ancient Sabha, the Aryan tribal assembly.

There are not, however, now existing any important Buddhist Assembly-halls or stūpa-houses which can be definitely ascribed to Asoka's time.[1] The largest and most important of all of them is that which is carved in the scarp of the Western Ghats at Kārlē, between Bombay and Poona. This appears to have been completed structurally about the first century B.C., though some of the figure-sculpture on the screen wall at the entrance is one or two centuries later. When the work was begun it is impossible to say, but the original cave may have been a natural one used by the *bhikkus* before Asoka's time.

The great nave (Pl. IX), which Fergusson compares in size with the choir of Norwich Cathedral,[2] is approached through a spacious porch (Pl. X, A) somewhat loftier and wider than the stūpa-house itself, richly decorated with figure-sculptures and with the familiar motives of Hīnayāna art, the plain Vedic railing and repetitions on a smaller scale of the gigantic horseshoe or sun-window which lights up and ventilates the nave. This great window, which follows the form of the vaulted roof, is partly filled by a massive timber framework resembling the torana of a palace gateway. Over the front wall of this porch, but now in a very dilapidated state, there was originally a wooden music

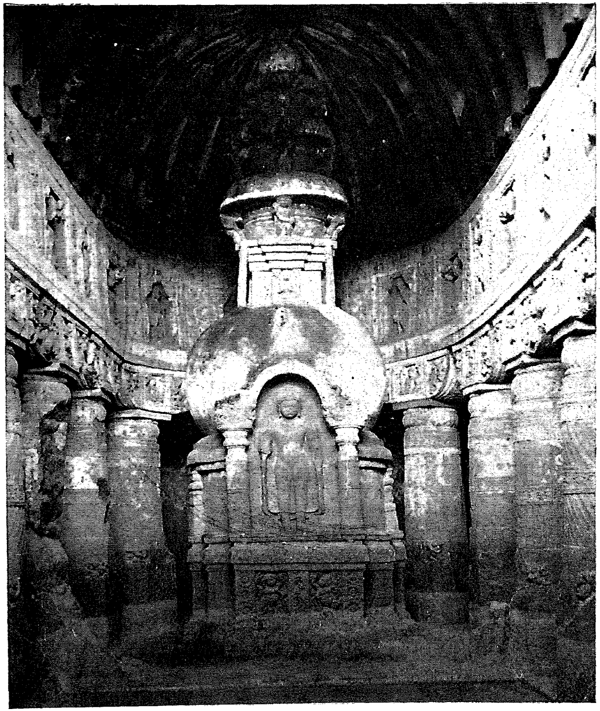
[1] Asoka died 226 B.C.

[2] The dimensions are 124 ft. 3 in. from the entrance to the back wall, 25 ft. 7 in. in width, height to crown of the vault 45 ft.

gallery, or *naubat khāna*, where, in the words of Asoka's edict, " the sound of the drum of the Dhamma was heard instead of the war-drum," announcing the great festivals or general meetings of the Sangha. In front of the porch there were two colossal " Persepolitan " or lotus pillars, differing from those of Asoka's time by having a shaft of sixteen sides. The right-hand pillar, however, has disappeared, and a small modern shrine dedicated to Dargā occupies the place where it stood. The fifteen pillars on either side of the nave are of the same order, only the shafts are octagonal. The symbolism has been explained above. The pillar is the world-lotus, springing from the mystic vase containing the cosmic ether (*ākāsa*), and supporting the Tusitā heavens where the Devas reside, who are here shown mounted on their respective vehicles (*vāhan*) and watching over the meetings of the Sangha just as in bygone ages they looked down upon the Vedic rites from their thrones above the sacrificial posts.

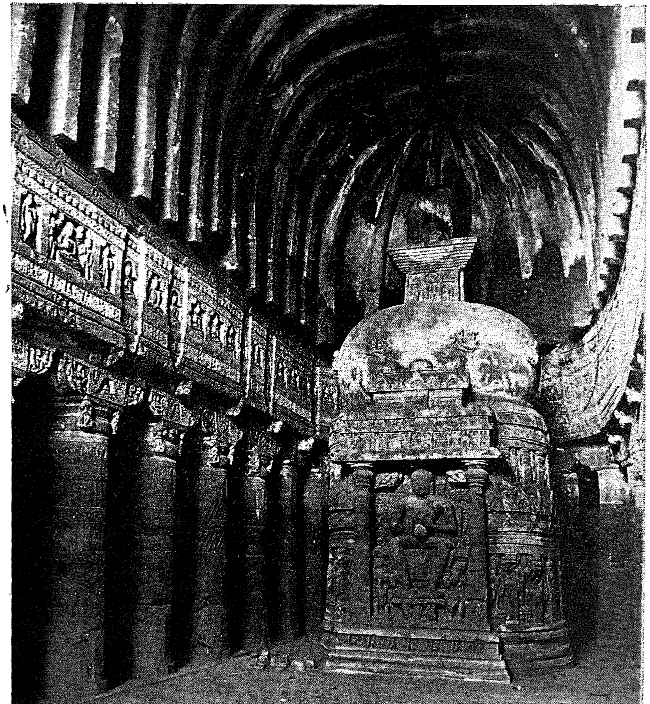
The sculpture, like that of Sānchī, is remarkably robust, and free from the dry academic mannerisms of the Gandhara school, proving that there was an original and highly developed school of figure-sculpture in India before the Hellenistic sculptors of the Kushān court broke the tradition which made it unlawful for artists to represent the person of the Blessed One. The seven pillars behind the stūpa have plain octagonal shafts without caps or bases. The stūpa itself, at the far end of the nave, crowned by the reliquary and the royal umbrella in wood, is also severely simple both in form and decoration, the only sculpture upon it being the two bands representing the railings of a double procession path. The surface was finished by a coating of fine chunam, simulating marble with its fine polish, which may have served as a ground for

Plate XIa



STŪPA-HOUSE, NO. XIX, AJANTĀ

Plate XIb



STŪPA-HOUSE, NO. XXVI, AJANTĀ

painting and gilding. All the pillars were similarly finished.

The imagination must fill in what is now wanting in this noble deserted Assembly-hall of the Sangha—the painted banners hung across the nave; the flickering light from the lamps reflected upon the glittering surface of the stūpa, and losing itself in the vaulted roof above; the bowed figures of the yellow-robed monks, solemnly pacing round the relic-shrine and chanting the sacred texts, or seated on the floor in meditation or grave debate; the pious laymen looking on from between the close-set pillars of the nave, and following the sacramental path along the outer ambulatory.

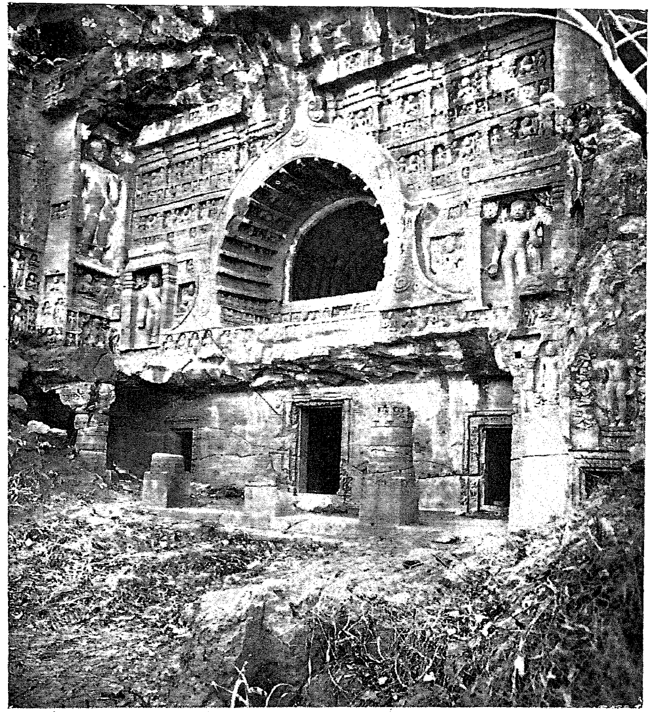
In the ancient but long deserted Buddhist university of Ajantā, carved in the ravine of the Wāghorā torrent in the upper basin of the Tāptī river, and now in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, there is a great series of stūpa-houses and monasteries dating from about the second and first centuries B.C. (Nos. IX and X) to the seventh century A.D. or later (No. XXVI). The site chosen is a lofty scarp of rock in a secluded glen, crescent-shaped and overlooking a mountain torrent which pours over the high rocks at the northern end of the ravine in a great cascade. Truly a fit place for meditation, and one which every Indian poet would associate with the birth of the holy Ganges in the wilds of Himālaya. We might be sure that the Buddhist *bhikkus* were not the first to fix their ashrams here. The history of Buddhist art for nine hundred years is told in the twenty-six chapels and college halls ranged along the cliff. First the choice of the crescent-shaped site shows the association of early Buddhism with the ancient Vedic Chandra worship. Next the strict asceticism of the primitive

Buddhist Church is revealed in the oldest group of monastic halls, Nos. XIII, XII, XI, and VIII, including the stūpa-houses IX and X, with their entrances north or north-east to exclude the sunlight, their plain octagonal pillars and the restraint in decoration characteristic of the Hīnayāna school. The second to the fifth centuries of the Christian era are represented by the adjacent group including the monasteries numbered XIV and XVIII and the splendid stūpa-house XIX. These occupy the centre of the crescent. On the western tip of the crescent are the monastic halls numbered I to VI, most of which belong to the seventh century; and on the other extremity of the bow, with their entrances turned towards the setting sun—the Saiva aspect—are the colleges numbered XX to XXV and the great stūpa-house XXVI, the last of the series. The architectural history of Ajantā thus begins about the same time as the Kārlē stūpa-house, and concludes with the death of the Emperor Harsha, the great patron of Mahāyana Buddhism, near the middle of the seventh century.

Possibly the Saiva movement which began in Southern India in the sixth century influenced the latest phase of architectural ritual at Ajantā.

Comparing the finest Assembly-halls—the Chapter-houses of the abbey of Ajantā—with that of Kārlē, it is not surprising to find that the distance of seven centuries which separates them has brought about a great change in Buddhist art and architecture. The Devas of Vedic India who looked down from the massive pillars of the Sangha of Kārlē have disappeared. Some of the principal motives of early Buddhist art, such as the Vedic railing, are missing; others, like the "Persepolitan" capital, are altered almost past recognition or reduced to mere accessories. The stūpa, from

Plate XIIa



STŪPA-HOUSE NO. XXVI, AJANTĀ, FAÇADE

Plate XIIb



VISHVAKARMA STŪPA-HOUSE, ELLORA

being a reliquary or a mere symbol, has become the shrine where the Blessed One Himself is worshipped as the Deity. On and above the capitals inside and outside the Chapter-houses and on the walls of the outer ambulatory, crowds of the mysterious Beings, the Bodhīsattvas, helping the progress of humanity towards the final goal, are absorbed in *yoga*, or teaching Divine wisdom.

The spirit of the classic age of Sanskrit poetry and drama reveals itself in the greater refinement of technique, elegance of design, and carefully studied proportions. The Chapter-house now known as Cave XIX is one of the gems of Buddhist architectural design, but in dimensions it is far less important than the Kārlē Assembly-hall, for it is considerably less than half the size of the latter.[1] The sumptuous fresco paintings of the earlier Ajantā school are here transformed into coloured bas-reliefs.[2] The stūpa is glorified into a noble shrine for the image of the Master as the Teacher, with a canopy like a church steeple, reaching almost to the summit of the vaulted roof—a finely conceived design, uniting the fantasy of Gothic sculpture with the dignified rhythm of the Renaissance. The upper part of the steeple is formed by the relic casket and a triple umbrella, or lotus with turned-down petals, symbolising the heavenly spheres. They are supporting, by dwarf figures, the *pishāchas*, or demons, who submitted themselves to the Law of the enlightened One.

The latest of the Chapter-houses of Ajantā, No.

[1] The interior is only 46 ft. 4 in. in length, 23 ft. 7 in. in width, 24 ft. 4 in. in height.

[2] The fine coating of plaster with which Indian stone sculpture was usually finished served as a ground for painting, and was the equivalent to the *ganōsis*, or wax coating, of classic Greek sculpture.

XXVI, belongs to the group of monastic halls which are oriented towards the setting sun. The eclipse-dragon, Rāhu, is carved at the crown of the great sun-window which lights the nave, and at the springing of the arch is the first suggestion of the crocodile-dragon of the cosmic ocean which in later Indian art has an established place there. The Chapter-house is considerably larger than No. XIX,[1] and is even more richly decorated. The design of the façade is better conceived, but there is less refinement in the exuberant carving of the interior. The stūpa here enshrines the image of Maitreya, the Buddhist Messiah, seated in European fashion upon a throne the legs of which are formed of lions and elephants. His footstool is a lotus with turned-down petals. Here and in No. XIX we can see the gradual transformation of the stūpa into a temple, a process by which the stūpa-house of early Buddhism lost its *raison d'être*.

At Ellora, not far from the south of Ajantā, celebrated as one of the great Indian *tīrths*, or places of pilgrimage—for here also a great waterfall pouring over a crescent-shaped scarp is a symbol of the birth of the Ganges—there is a stūpa-house larger than that last described, and probably somewhat earlier in date. It is especially interesting from being dedicated to Visvakarma, the Architect of the Gods, who was the patron saint of the master-builder. This great Assembly-hall, therefore, may have been at one time the Guild-hall of the masons who for many generations were employed in making the rock-cut shelters for the devotees of many sects who fixed their *ashrams* in this holy ground, as well as many temples for the crowds of pilgrims, including the amazing Kailāsa,

[1] The dimensions are: length 67 ft., breadth 36 ft. 3 in., height 31 ft. 3 in.

Siva's Himālayan paradise, where the Ganges has its source.

The organisation of handicraftsmen into co-operative societies, or guilds, was known even before Asoka's time. Like the village communities, these craft-guilds regulated their own affairs without much interference from the royal courts of law. It is extremely likely that the Sangha of the masons working at Ellora had its own Assembly-hall, for the king's craftsmen, like the king himself, performed priestly functions, and as temple architects designed the dwelling-places of the gods. The great temples had their own hereditary craftsmen, who served as architects for the village communities, a custom which has helped to keep alive the traditions of Indian craftsmanship even to the present day.

The design of the façade of the Visvakarma stūpa-house is somewhat original, perhaps, as Fergusson suggests, owing to the architects' endeavour to diminish the glare of sunshine in the interior, due to the western orientation of the hall, by dividing the great sun-window of the nave. But as this result could have been secured in the usual way by hanging screens over the opening, and as the pediments over the shrines on either side of the window also show a departure from the traditional types, it is possible that the novelty of design is due to a school of craftsmen with traditions different from those of Bedsā, Kārlē, Kanheri, Ajantā, and elsewhere. The structural stūpa-house of the sixth or seventh century at Ter has a gable divided in a similar fashion.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIKHARA TEMPLE, OR KING'S TABERNACLE

THE stūpa, as we have seen, was the monument of a dead king, and the cult of stūpa worship, which took the chief place in early Buddhist ritual, was no doubt connected with the *shrāddha* ceremonies of royalty. The stūpa-house, as a memorial chapel, must have had its counterpart in some kind of sacrificial structure, temporary or otherwise, where the living king assisted at the performance of religious rites.

Such were the tabernacles in which the fire and Soma rites of the Aryan tribes were performed in Vedic India. In them the celebrant, whether he were chieftain or high priest, sometimes remained for a whole year, so they must have been structures upon which the royal craftsmen bestowed religious care. In the Sathapatha Brahmana, a special form of tabernacle called the Āgnidrīya, or fire-house, is mentioned, which was quite distinct from the Āgni-sāla, the fire-hall of the Aryan household. It was in charge of a special fire-priest, the Āgnīdhra, and through the kindling of the fire it became the dwelling-place of the All-gods (Visve-devas).

The Vedic rites were therefore not independent of the builder's craft, as Fergusson and other writers have assumed. In later Vedic times the development of the Yoga cult would have made the building of a private

royal chapel almost a necessity. There is much historical significance in the name given to a temple in Southern India—a *kōvil,* or King's house.

The limited view of ancient Indian life afforded by early Buddhist sculpture gives no indication of any kind of royal chapel other than the domed stūpa shrine. Buddhism was a protest against the rites celebrated by Aryan kings in Vedic India. No Brahmanical paintings or sculptures of that period are known. In the beginning the Buddhist cult of stūpa worship concerned itself with the Buddha as the Great Yogi, who at his death had attained to Pari-Nirvāna—the Sākya Prince had not assumed any priestly functions or instituted a ritual of divine worship. The royal chapel in early Buddhist times conformed to the ritual of stūpa worship and was covered by a dome, as shown in the shrine attached to the Palace of the Gods in the Bharhut sculptures (Pl. XXXIV, A).

It was not until Mahāyāna Buddhism introduced the idea of a Bodhīsattva as a king of the heavenly spheres that another form of shrine appeared in Indian art—that which is crowned by the curvilinear steeple, or sikhara, not unlike the high peaked crown, or *mūkuta,* of the Bodhīsattva himself. And the form, when it does appear, is, as Fergusson observed, already fully developed as if it had a long history behind it.

There are several indications that the sikhara temple was the Kshatriya king's chapel where the rites of Sūrya or Vishnu worship were performed in his presence as the gods' representative on earth. The cap of it, in the oldest as well as in the most modern examples, is invariably the same as that found in Asoka's imperial standards—the *amalaka,* or fruit of Vishnu's blue lotus, the symbol of a Chakra-vartin, or world ruler. The Mānāsāra Silpa-Sastra lays down the rule that a

Vishnu temple must be placed on the Rājapatha, the King's Road, with its entrance facing east. The geographical distribution of the sikhara temple corresponds with that of the Vaishnava cult; it is the almost universal form in Northern India, where the Vaishnavaites are in the great majority, whereas the temples in Southern India, where the Saivas predominate, are as frequently crowned by the stūpa dome.

In the Buddhist temple architecture the sikhara became the distinctive mark of the Bodhīsattva cult, associated with Mahāyānist doctrine, while the stūpa was the architectonic symbol of the Hīnayānists, for whom the Buddha was a yogi and a teacher rather than a king. Mahāyānists pursued the path of *bhakti*, or loyalty to their spiritual king; orthodox Hīnayānists sought salvation in the *jnāna-marga*, the way of knowledge of the Law. The distinction between the Buddha as a king and as a *guru* is very clearly marked in Indian painting and sculpture.[1]

As to the peculiar Indian form of the sikhara, there can be little doubt that it was derived from bambu and thatch construction. The *amalaka* was probably the straw cap bound with strings to make it watertight, and the *kalasa*, or jar, was an inverted water-pot placed over the ends of the bambu supports to protect them from the rain, according to the practice still followed by native thatchers in Bengal and Southern India. The symbolism of the lotus and the nectar or soma jar was a decorative treatment of these practical constructive details.

There is good reason to believe that this most characteristic feature of Indo-Aryan architecture was not, as Fergusson was convinced, indigenous in India, but was introduced by the Aryans from Mesopotamia,

[1] See below, section ii ("Sculpture"), chapter i.

together with the millets, barley, wheat, and oil-seeds with which they enriched the agriculture of non-Aryan India. There does not exist in India any primitive indigenous type from which the sikhara can be derived, for the temple car covered by a bambu framework in the form of sikhara can hardly be the prototype of the temple itself. But the tall conical mud huts of Mesopotamian villages are strikingly suggestive of the conical form of temple sikhara sometimes found in India.

The more usual curvilinear form of it in India is only a technical modification of structure due to the use of a bambu framework. As to the antiquity of these cone-shaped structures in Mesopotamia there can be no doubt. A group of buildings carved on a relief discovered by Layard in the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh (Pl. XX, A), built in the eighth century B.C., shows both the sikhara cone and the hemispherical stūpa-dome. Whether this relief represents a village or a palace, it certainly suggests the probability that both the Indo-Aryan forms were derived from Mesopotamia—a probability which is greatly increased by the recent discovery of the Aryan domination of the Euphrates valley in the second millennium B.C., and of the interesting fact that the Aryans of Mitanni, besides worshipping the Vedic gods, also venerated the Assyrian goddess Ishtar or Ashtaroth. "Verily now have I sent her (Ishtar)," writes King Dasaratha to his brother-in-law, Amenhetep III, King of Egypt, "and she is gone. Indeed, in the time of my father, the lady Ishtar went to that land; and just as she dwelt therein formerly and they honoured her, so may now my brother honour her ten times more than before." This remarkable letter gives a very different account of

[1] *History of the Near East*, H. R. Hall, p. 197.

the religious attitude of the Aryans in Vedic times to that given by Fergusson when he writes of the sikhara that "no-one can accuse the pure Aryans of introducing this form into India, or of building temples at all, or of worshipping images of Siva and Vishnu with which these temples are filled."[1]

Another more ancient Mesopotamian sculpture is the famous stele of Narām Sin, *circ.* 2750 B.C., in the Louvre (Pl. XX, B), commemorating his victory over Satuni, King of Lulaba. Whether the tall cone represents a king's fort, or is only an artistic convention for the summit of a lofty mountain, it certainly suggests a connection between the Indian sikhara and Mesopotamian art, for the shrine crowned by the sikhara and by Vishnu's lotus emblem was a symbol of the holy mountain Mandara, of the mystic Merū round which the sun and moon revolved.

To sum up the evidence, it seems that the sikhara, as well as the many Assyrian or Babylonian decorative motives occurring at Sānchī and Bharhut, are accounted for by six centuries of Aryan rule in Mesopotamia. Used as a temporary shrine or tabernacle in ancient Vedic ritual, and later on in the cult of Yoga, the sikhara was introduced into India by the Aryan conquerors; there, by the employment of bambu in its construction, it acquired its peculiar Indian curvilinear form. Buddhism deprived it of its *raison d'être* as the shrine of the Sun-god; therefore the form only survived in bambu or wooden materials until the development of the cult of *bhakti* in Mahāyāna Buddhism again made the king, as a Bodhīsattva, the symbol of divine majesty and the temporary ruler of the Sangha. In Gupta times the revival of Vedic traditions in the royal courts of India

[1] *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.* 2nd Edition. Introduction, p. 14.

inspired the master-builder to give a permanent form to the royal sikhara such as Asoka had given to the stūpa. Thus, when the sikhara first appears in Indian architecture in brick and stone, the form of it was fully developed, for it was coeval with the beginning of Aryan rule in India.

The form of the sikhara lent itself well for enshrining the image of Vishnu in his especial character as the Upholder of the Heavens (Pl. LX, A), for then he is always standing rigidly upright, his body forming the mystic Mount Merū round which the universe revolves. He is armed with the weapons of an Aryan chieftain, and on his high-peaked crown, the form of which is repeated by the sikhara, flash the three sun jewels, marking sunrise, noon, and sunset. Through the doorway facing east, or the window[1] above it usually formed like the great window of the Buddhist stūpa-house, the light of the morning sun streams in upon the image when Lakshmi, the bright goddess of the day, rises from the cosmic ocean to greet her lord and throws herself upon his breast.[2]

Fergusson assumed the sikhara temple to have been borrowed by the Aryans from some aboriginal fetish shrine of a type which no longer existed. But in reality it is the type of Indian architectural design which retains most clearly the mark of its Aryan associations; and its history, if it were completely known, would be

[1] In modern temples this window is usually filled up with sculpture, and the shrine is only illuminated by lamps, but the original intention of the design is clear enough.

[2] It is by no means the case, however, that the Vishnu shrine in modern times is always occupied by a Vishnu image, for should the possessors of a sikhara temple happen to be Saivas, they would instal a Siva image or symbol therein, and in doing so they would not admit any architectural inconsistency, for Siva to the Saivas, like Vishnu to the Vaishnavas, is the Three in One—Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva.

the history of Aryan rule in India, as every Indo-Aryan dynasty built royal chapels for the worship of its Ishta-devata. Beginning with Vedic times, it was the symbol of the Kshatriya chieftain's priestly functions, laid aside for a time when the Buddhist monk became the people's guru, and the relic shrine the people's temple. It reappeared when Buddhism itself found an iconic symbol in the crowned king, and when the abbot of a monastery assumed all the insignia of royalty. From that time to the present day almost every temple in Aryāvarta, the modern Hindustan, has been crowned by the royal sikhara.

The shape of the sikhara follows the plan of the shrine, or cella,[1] which it covers. This may be circular, octagonal, or star-shaped, but generally it is square. The simplest form of it is found in thousands of way-side shrines in Northern India (Pl. XV). Every province has a characteristic variation given by local schools of craftsmen, but these are much too numerous to describe. So far as is known, the most ancient sikhara temple existing in India is the great shrine of the Bodhi-tree at Bodh-Gayā, marking the spot where the Blessed One obtained enlightenment. The shrine which Asoka built at the same place is represented in the Bharhut sculptures (Pl. XIII, A). It is interesting to note that here and elsewhere at Bharhut the symbolism of the "Persepolitan" capital is explained, for the turned-down petals of the lotus are carved upon the "bell" of the Asokan pillar standing in front of the entrance. The present brick temple at Bodh-Gayā (Pl. XIII, B) is structurally, perhaps, that which Huvishka, the Kushān king, built in the first century B.C., but the exterior is to a great extent a modern restoration undertaken by the Archæological

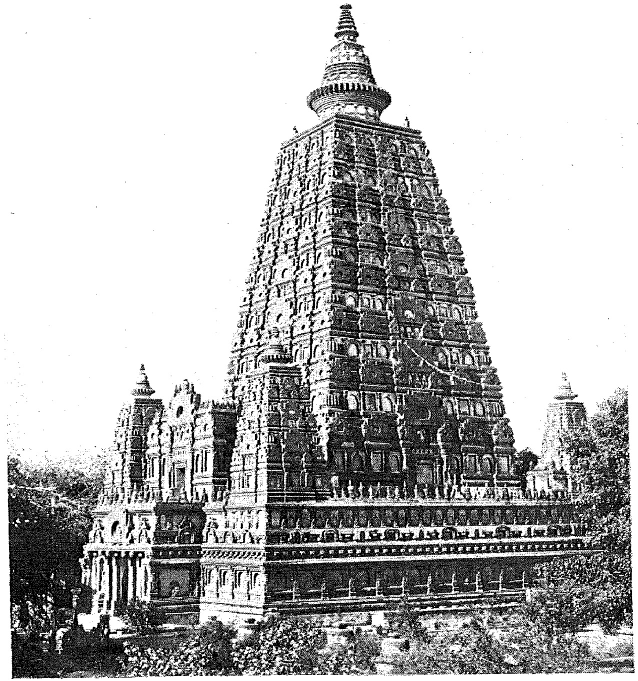
[1] *Hiranya-garbha*, womb of the universe.

PLATE XIIIA



ASOKA'S TEMPLE AT BODH-GAYĀ

PLATE XIIIB



EXISTING TEMPLE AT BODH-GAYĀ

Department under General Cunningham. It is of the type known as the *panchratna*, or "five jewels"—that is, a temple roofed by a group of five spires or domes.

When this temple took the place of Asoka's, the Buddha was already worshipped as the Supreme Lord of the Sangha and an incarnation of Vishnu. Several of the Buddhist Kushān kings had names which were synonyms of Vishnu, and the tree was one of Vishnu's symbols. His was the mystic tree of which the sun and moon and stars are fruits. It was therefore appropriate that the spot where the Buddha attained to full knowledge of the Universal Law under the Tree of Wisdom should be marked by the symbol of world-dominion, Vishnu's sacred shrine. When in modern times the Mahant of a neighbouring Vaishnava monastery took possession of the restored temple, the Burmese Buddhists who were accustomed to worship there protested that Hindus had no right to be custodians of the holy places of Buddhism; but in all probability the Mahant's claim was historically justified, for the Vaishnavas were the heirs of Mahāyāna Buddhism, though the creed of the monks of Bodh-Gayā did not correspond with that of Sākya Muni.

The Bodh-Gayā temple is more interesting for its historical associations than for its architectural design, and unfortunately no important structural temples of the Gupta period, the classic age of Indian sculpture and painting, are extant, doubtless because they were built either of wood or of brick. But the succeeding centuries which preceded Gothic architecture in Europe were extraordinarily rich in temple building. Many volumes would be necessary to do full justice to the fertility of invention and skill of craftsmanship lavished upon the royal chapels of the dynasties which ruled over Aryāvarta.

For the style of architecture most characteristic of the great Gupta period, one must turn to the ancient capitals of Indian dynasties least affected by the storm of Muhammadan iconoclasm which began to sweep over Northern India in the eleventh century, and continued to rage at intervals down to the time of Aurangzib. Bhuvanēshvar, which from a time of unknown antiquity was the capital of the kingdom of Orissa, or Kalinga—the conquest of which by Asoka is described in his Edicts as the event which led to his becoming a disciple of the True Law—is one of these.

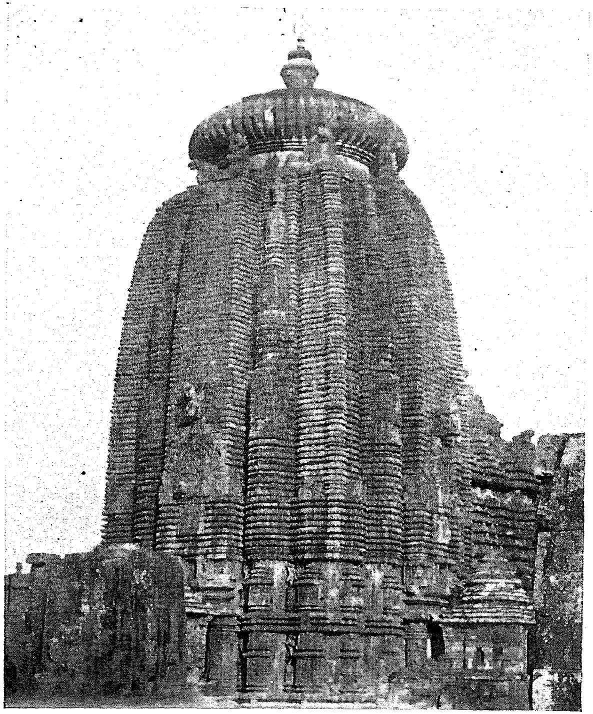
Surrounded by rocky hills in the caves of which Jain and Buddhist hermits found retreats, Bhuvanēshvar in the course of centuries acquired an odour of sanctity which made it, like Benares and other places, a city of the gods, encircled by a pilgrims' procession path and filled with hundreds of temples. The name Bhuvanēshvar, "Lord of the Universe," suggests that it was a king's capital, and the temples are, in fact, nearly all crowned by the royal sikhara, and have the orthodox aspect of a Vishnu shrine facing the rising sun, though in many cases Siva is the deity worshipped.

In Jain, Buddhist, or Brahmanical temples when the saint or deity of the shrine is worshipped as a hero, or world-conqueror, Indian craft ritual ordains that the roof shall be Vishnu's spire instead of Siva's dome.

In the centre of the group towers the steeple of the Great Linga-rāj temple, over 180 feet high (Pl. XIV, A), a masterpiece of fine masonry built of the local laterite stone, perfectly jointed without mortar or cement.

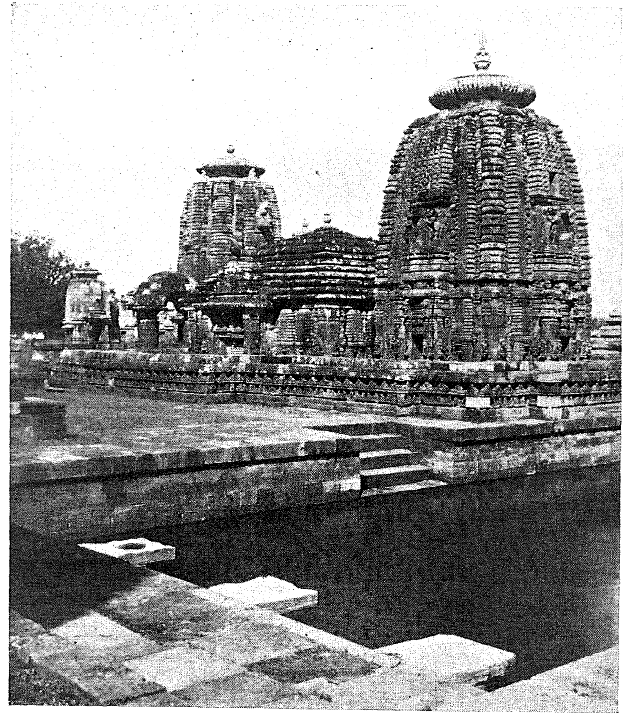
For purity of outline and dignity of its rich but unobtrusive decoration, as well as for its superb technique, the Linga-rāj sikhara must rank as one of the greatest works of the Indian builder, though its

Plate XIVa



SIKHARA OF LINGA-RĀJ TEMPLE, BHUVANĒSHVAR

Plate XIVb



MĀRKANDĒYA POOL AND TEMPLE, BHUVANĒSHVAR

architectural effect is marred by the confused grouping of the later shrines clustered round its base. According to Brahmanical tradition, the temple was built by a king who reigned in the seventh century A.D. This would make it one of the oldest at Bhuvanēshvar, and, from its location in the centre of the sacred circle, one might expect this to be the case.

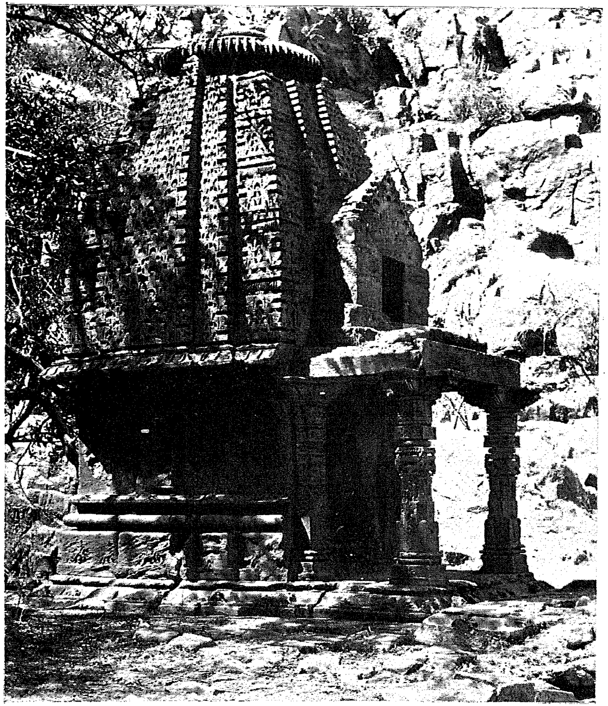
But archæologists assign to it a later date—the ninth or tenth century. Such discrepancies between Indian and European chronology are often accounted for by the fact that a great temple built as a votive offering by a ruling dynasty frequently enclosed a smaller shrine of venerable antiquity. We have seen that this was the case with the Great Stūpa at Sānchī; and as Bhuvanēshvar was a sacred city long before the ninth century, it is not unlikely that the king who built the Linga-rāj temple to the glory of his patron deity enclosed within the royal sikhara an ancient shrine where his ancestors had been accustomed to worship. The "linga" of Siva worshipped there may have been originally a Jain or Buddhist stūpa. It would be as easy to enclose the cubical dome-shaped shrine, such as is depicted in early Buddhist sculpture, within Vishnu's lofty steeple as it would be to cover a stūpa by a stūpa. Whether this method was adopted in particular cases could only be ascertained by careful examination of the holy of holies, into which the inquisitive archæologist is never allowed to enter.

It is, however, perfectly clear that this was one of the main principles of Indian temple design. A shrine in which a god had deigned to dwell for centuries might fall into decay from natural causes, but the temple architect who was priest as well as builder would never profane it by rebuilding it on a larger scale. Another site might be chosen upon which to raise a

more stately abode, or the deity might be honoured by building a series of enclosures, each one grander and more sumptuous than the last, whereby the builder could demonstrate the manifold aspects in which the divinity declared itself, and provide accommodation for the priests and pilgrims who worshipped there. But the shrine itself could only be preserved for posterity by enclosing it in imperishable materials. Both the stūpa and the sikhara were sacrosanct symbols which could not be lightly changed to make them more pleasing to the eye.

As Hindu ritual is individualistic and not congregational, the temple service does not necessarily require more than a fitting shrine for the deity and a verandah or porch for the custodian of it. Many thousands of Hindu temples are of this simple type, either with the sikhara steeple, as in Pl. XV, or with the stūpa dome, which can be seen in the Buddhist stūpa-houses at Ajantā (Pl. XI). But the elaborate ritual of the royal court, the attraction of a venerated shrine as a resort for pilgrims or the numerous civic purposes to which a temple was devoted, often made it necessary to provide a suitable shelter for large congregations. The temple was the durbar hall of kings, the meeting-house for the Assembly of the village community; it was a parliament-house and a debating-hall where philosophical or religious discussions took place. It was at the temple, also, that the people listened to recitations of the great epics, to the stories told by the village *kathaks*, the singing of sacred songs, or watched the temple *nautch*. Many of the great temples built by royal dynasties or by wealthy devotees have therefore a series of spacious *mandapams*, or assembly-halls, dedicated to such uses, upon the construction of which the highest skill of the Indian master-builder was

Plate XVa



SIKHARA SHRINE, CHOHTAN, MARWAR

Plate XVb



SIKHARA SHRINE, BOD, BENGAL

lavished. The structural importance of the shrine was augmented, not only by increasing the height of the steeple, but by piling numerous small replicas of the steeple itself upon the sides of it—by which an effect of great monumental dignity was attained. The builders, also, who devoted their whole lives to the service of the deity, thereby acquired merit for themselves, just as the Brahmans did by the repetition of *mantras*, or the pilgrim by his constant pacing round the holy shrine.

The magnificent royal chapels built in the course of many centuries by the Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu dynasties of Northern India are a proof that the restrictions thus imposed upon the master-builder's initiative did not deaden his creative powers—the decadence of Indian architecture was due to other causes.

Kanauj, Benares, Ujjain, Mathurā, Gaur or Lak nauti, and other important capitals of ancient India, where one would expect to find the most splendid royal chapels built by the powerful dynasties of Aryāvarta before Muhammadan times, were repeatedly sacked and destroyed by the iconoclasts of Islam. But volumes might be devoted to those which remain at other places to illustrate the development of the sikhara type of temple, built in brick and stone, from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries.

The most remarkable group, after that of Bhuvanēshvar, is at Khajurāho, in Central India, formerly the capital of the Chandēla dynasty, now a deserted place lying about 150 miles south-east of Gwalior. Here about thirty royal chapels are monuments of the palmy days of the Chandēl kingdom, from about A.D. 950 to 1050, when it held a strong front against the attacks of Islam, and its dominions covered the districts now

known as Bundēlkhand in the Native States and the Central Provinces of British India. The Jain, Vaishnava and Saiva sects had each an equal share in building the temples, but they are nearly all of the sikhara type, symbolising the universal sovereignty of the deity worshipped—whether it be a Jain hero,[1] Vishnu, who rules in Vaikuntha, or Siva, the Lord of Kailāsa.

The back view of the Chāturbhuja[2] temple, Pl. XVI, gives a good idea of the effect of these stately structures, in which, by adding a covered procession path and massive porches to the cell in which the image of the deity is enshrined, and by piling pinnacle upon pinnacle, carved with wondrous patience and skill, around the central sikhara, the builders realised a noble architectonic conception of Vishnu's holy mountain, Mandara, with which he stirred the cosmic waters to bring up the golden jar with the nectar of immortality, or of his mystic lotus rooted in the depths of the universal *ākāsha*[3] which flowers in the highest heavens.

The side-view of the same temple, Pl. XVII, shows the three pillared halls built in front of the vestibule of the shrine, the principal one the assembly-hall of the people, through which they had access to the covered procession path, the next the dancing-hall, or Nātāmandapam, and the third the entrance porch of the temple, which was called the Bhoga-mandapam,[4] and was dedicated to the offerings of grain, sweetmeats, and flowers brought by the worshippers.[5] These halls are

[1] Jina = Conqueror.

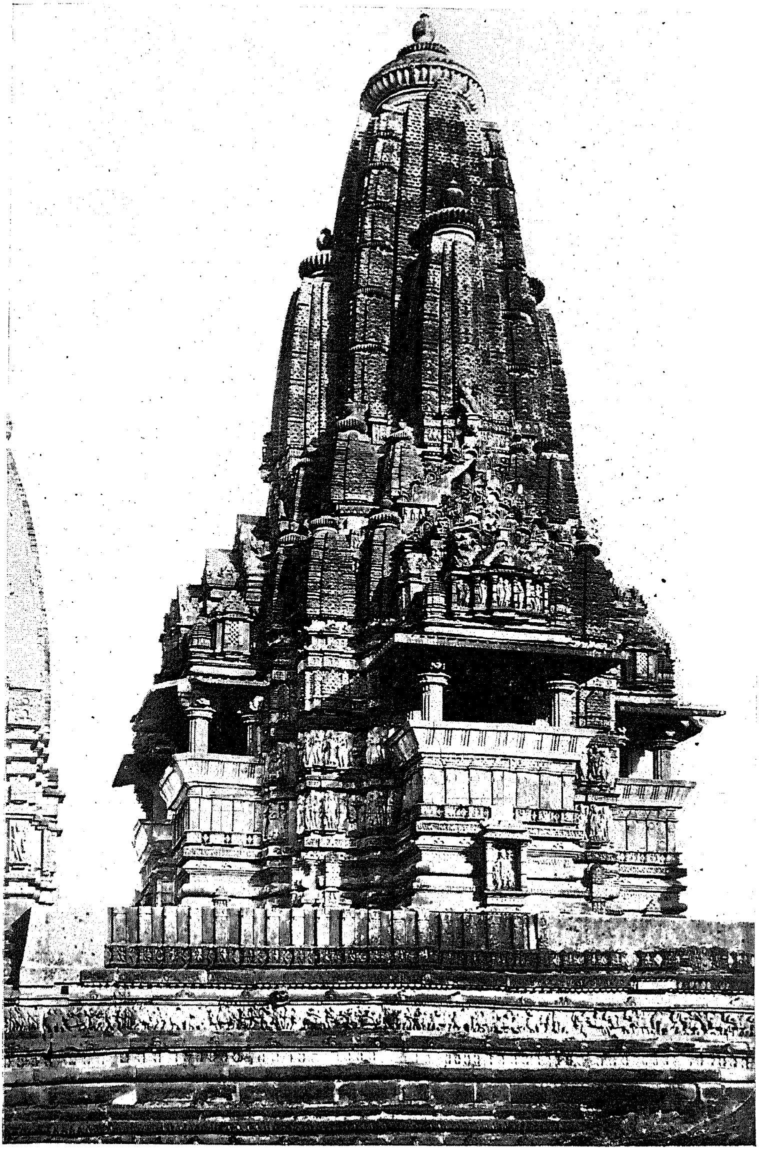
[2] Chāturbhuja is a name of Vishnu signifying his universal sovereignty.

[3] Ether.

[4] Bhoga = food.

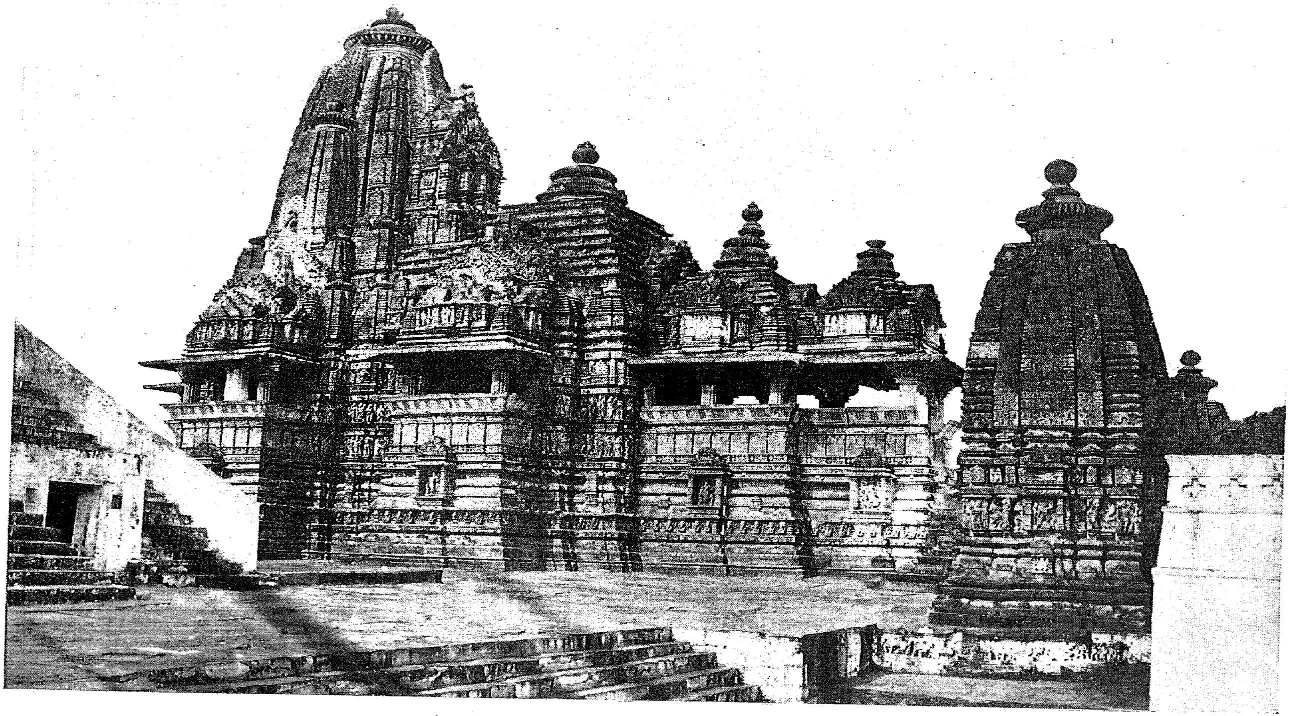
[5] The dimensions of the temple are approximately the same as those of the Kandarya Mahādeva temple, which are given by Fergusson as follows: Length 109 ft., breadth 60 ft., height 88 ft. above the terrace, or 116 ft. above the ground.

PLATE XVI



CHATURBHUJA TEMPLE, KHAJURĀHO, FROM WEST

PLATE XVII



CHATURBHUJA TEMPLE, KHAJURĀHO, FROM SOUTH-EAST

all roofed by domes built up in Indian fashion by concentric rings, and carved internally to represent the mystic lotus, the roof of the world, while the exterior assumes a pyramidal form, and, like the sikharas, is crowned with a finial in the shape of the amrita jar, and with a colossal cap representing the lotus fruit. It is to be regretted that the material provided by the Archæological Survey of India seldom does justice to the beauty of Indian domes, some of which, as Fergusson remarks, are "the most exquisite specimens of elaborate roofing that can anywhere be seen." [1]

The famous Rajput fortress of Chitor, the capture of which by Akbar in 1568, after a prolonged siege, was one of the most memorable military events of his reign, contains many memorials of the great Rānā of Mewār, Kumbha (1428–68), among them the magnificent nine-storied tower of victory, 122 feet high,[2] built to celebrate his defeat of the Sultan of Mālwā in 1440. In the fifteenth century Mewār, whose dynasty proudly claimed descent from the Sūryavamsa of ancient Aryāvarta, was the chief of the Rajput States, and at constant war with the three Musalmān kingdoms, Gujerat, Mālwā, and Khandēsh, which had thrown off their allegiance to the Sultanate of Delhi. Kumbha Rānā's most powerful antagonist, Ahmad Shah of Gujerat, was also a great builder, and the splendid royal mosque which the latter built at Ahmadābād resembled very closely the great temple which was built in Kumbha's reign at Rānpur, in honour of

[1] For an explanation of the Indian method of dome construction, see Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. 2nd Edition. Vol. i, pp. 312–9.

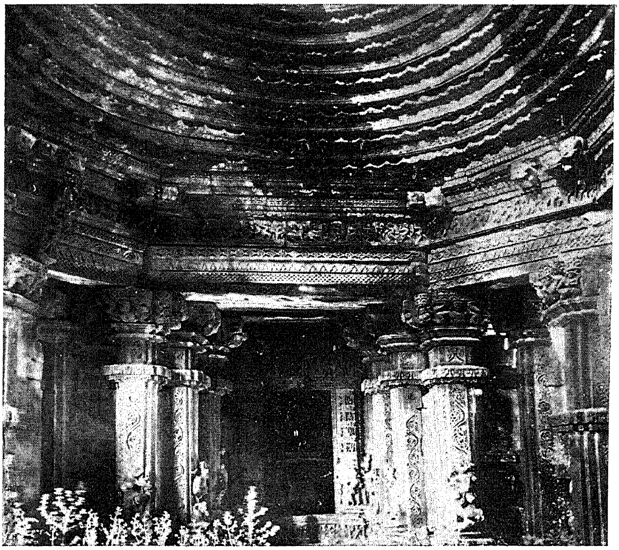
[2] These Hindu towers of victory are the lineal descendants of the pillars, or royal ensigns of Asoka and other Indo-Aryan kings. Converted to the service of Islam in later times, they became the models for the minarets of Muhammadan mosques.

the Tirthankaras, the divine heroes of the Jains, except that the sikhara, the ensign of the Sūrya-vamsa, which never appears in Musalman buildings, is wanting. The Gujerāti dynasty, like that of Mewār, was of Rajput descent—Ahmad Shah's grandfather having embraced Islam to save his life—and maintained all the traditions of Rajput culture, so that the Muhammadan architecture of Gujerat is "Saracenic" only in the sense that it is Indo-Aryan architecture adapted to the ritual of Islam.

At Chitor, which was his capital, Kumbhā Rānā built a royal chapel in honour of Vishnu, but the most important one there is named after his Queen, Mirā Bāī (Pl. XIX, A). Like the Khajurāho temple illustrated in Pl. XVI and XVII, it has a covered procession path round the shrine leading from the great assembly-hall, or Sabha-mandapam, with its lotus dome covered externally by a pyramidal roof which differs from those of the Khajurāho temples in being placed diagonally in relation to the front of the shrine. The lofty sikhara crowning the latter is more severe in style than those which crown the royal chapels of the Chandēla dynasty, although it is several centuries later in date; for the royal line of Mewār, proud of its illustrious ancestry, and schooled in a constant struggle for independence, has always maintained its martial traditions and some of the dignified simplicity of early Indo-Aryan court life.

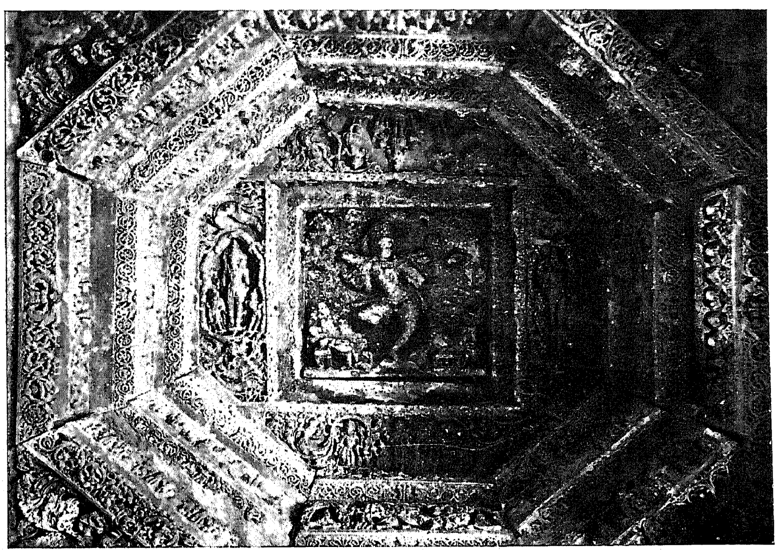
We have seen that the sikhara of a Vishnu temple, symbolically considered, is an architectonic rendering of Vishnu's holy mountain, Merū or Mandara, just as the tower of a Siva temple stands for Kailāsa, Siva's Himālayan mountain. The veneration of mountains has played a part in all religions, and it is quite probable that originally Vishnu and Siva were both personifica-

PLATE XVIIIA



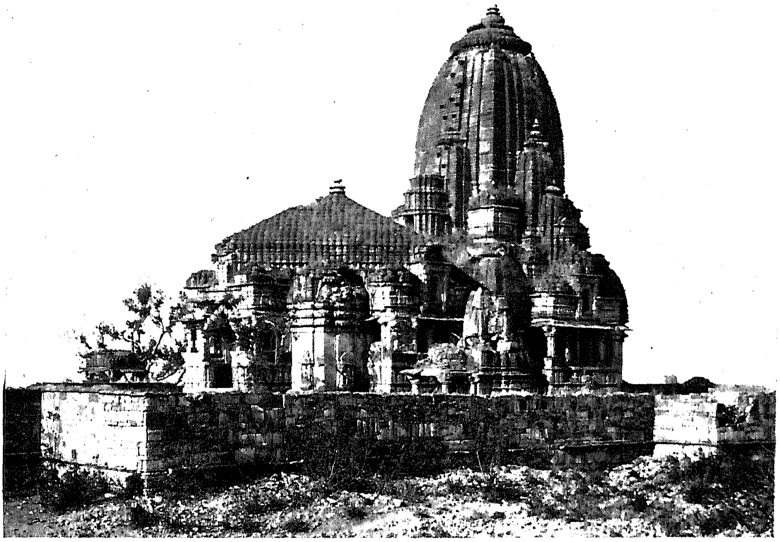
INTERIOR OF MANDAPAM, KHAJURĀHO

PLATE XVIIIB



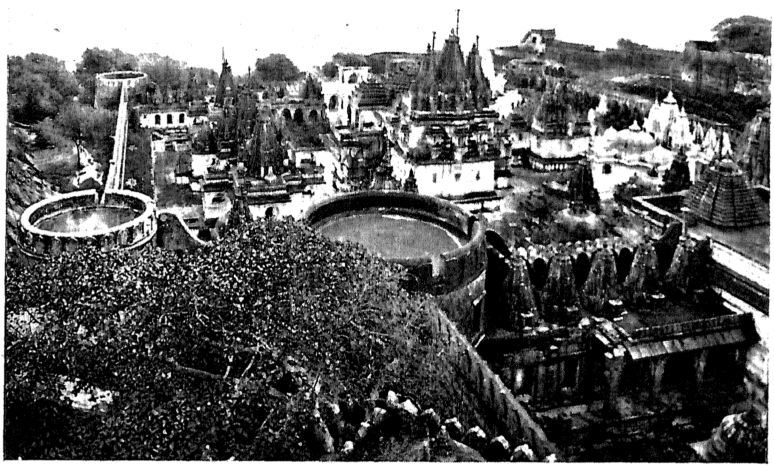
CARVING OF MANDAPAM ROOF, ITTAGI

PLATE XIXA



MĪRĀ BĀĪ'S TEMPLE, CHITOR

PLATE XIXB



CITY OF THE DEVAS, PALITĀNA

tions of mountains, the worship of which was a nucleus round which the speculations of Vedic seers accumulated. Whether the location of Mandara and Kailāsa in the Himālayas was the original one, or whether the early Aryans brought their own mountain worship into India, is a subject for speculation. But the ancient worship of mountains is still evidenced in popular Hinduism, and on every prominent hill-top in India one can expect to find a shrine, while many specially sacred hills are *tirths*, or places of pilgrimage, and have become, like Benares, Bhuvanēshvar, and other places, "cities of the gods." This is especially the case in the Jain community, whose most sacred places are the hills of Shatrunjaya, near Palitāna in Gujerat; Girnar, in the south of the Kāthiawar peninsula in the same province; and Parasnath, the highest point of a hilly range south of Rājmahal, in Bengal. The peculiarity of these Jain cities (Pl. XIX, B) is the extreme exclusiveness of their celestial inhabitants, for no mortals—not even priests—are allowed to sleep within the walls, and no food must be cooked on this holy ground. Before night falls, both priests and pilgrims must leave the gods to their meditations, and watchmen are placed at the gateways to prevent intruders disturbing them. This special sanctity has had the interesting effect of preserving intact the planning of an ancient Indian city with its numerous wards, in which different classes were grouped together as in separate villages, divided from each other by walled enclosures, which were closed and guarded at night.

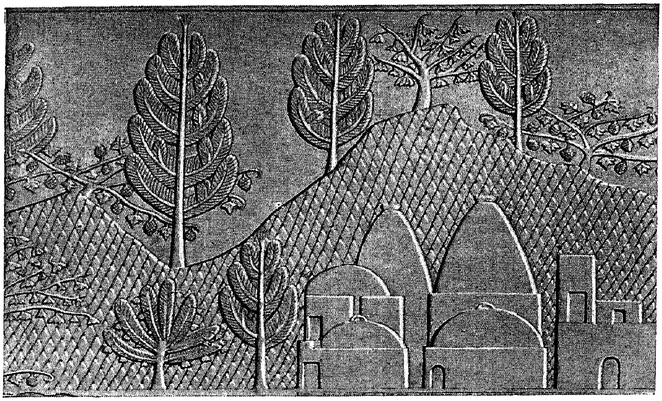
CHAPTER VII

THE SIVA AND VISHNU-SIVA TEMPLE

IN the last chapter we have tried to trace the evolution of the Indian sikhara chapel back to the patriarchal times when the Kshatriya chieftain officiated as high priest at the Aryan tribal sacrifices, and the Kshatriya householder had no need of a Brahman to direct the worship of his *lares et penates*. We have also seen how the memorial chapel of the dead Aryan chieftain was appropriated to Buddhist worship, and used as the Assembly-hall of the Sangha. It remains now to explain the subsequent evolution of the stūpa shrine in Hindu temple architecture.

Besides the Jain and Buddhist there was another sect, that of the Saivas, whose doctrine was similarly pessimistic, whose ritual was associated with funeral ceremonies, and who looked for salvation in pursuing the path of knowledge (*jnāna-marga*) rather than the path of steadfast loyalty and devotion (*bhakti-marga*) or of duty (*karma-marga*), to which the Kshatriya warrior mostly inclined. Siva, the Lord of Death, the deity worshipped by the Saivas, was the apotheosis of the Brahman ascetic, who found the path of knowledge by mortification of the flesh and by meditation. The religious teaching of the Saivas differed from that of the Jains and Buddhists in being based upon the Vedas as divine revelation. The metaphysical specula-

PLATE XXA



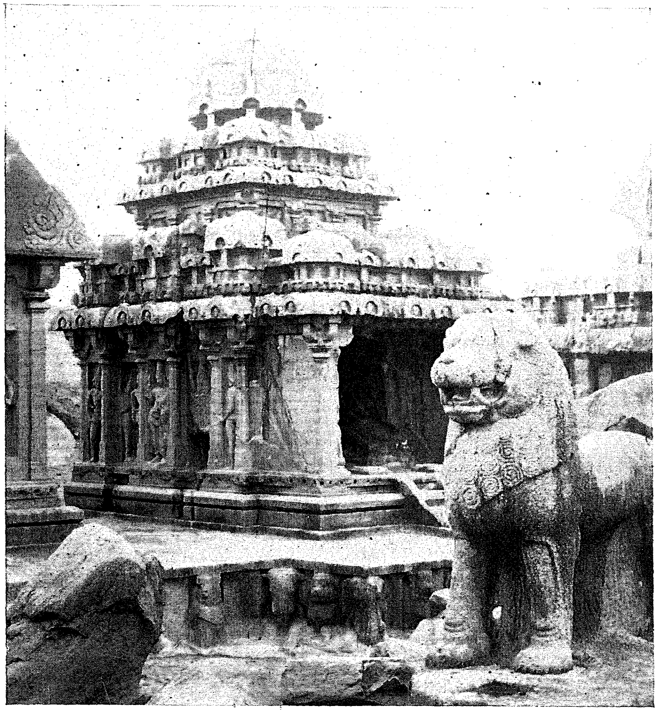
BAS-RELIEF FROM NINEVEH

PLATE XXB



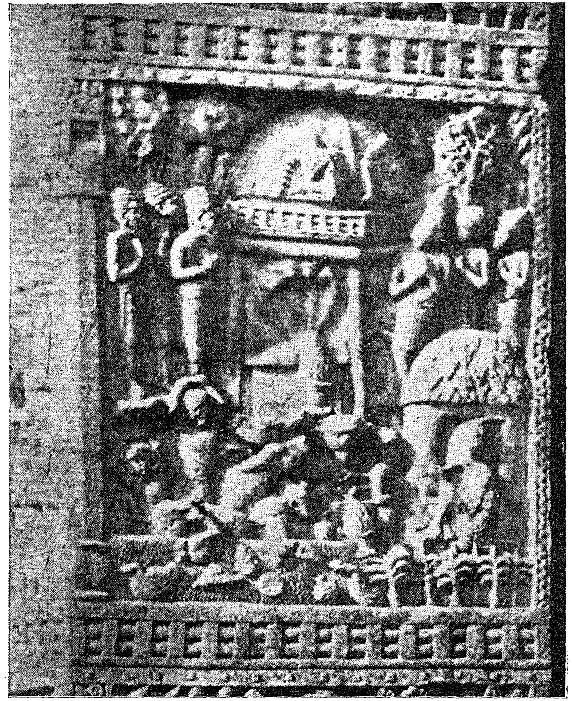
STELE OF NARĀN SIN

PLATE XXIA



SIVA SHRIṆE, MĀMALLAPURAM

PLATE XXIB



SIVA SHRINE AT SĀNCHĪ

tions of the Upanishads were far too abstruse to make Saivism a popular cult in ancient India, so it was not until after many centuries, when the Vedic religious teaching had penetrated deeply into the mind of the Indian masses, that the genius of a Sankarācharya could make this exclusive cult of Brahmanism appeal to the popular religious sense. Until about the seventh century A.D. one finds no architectural evidence of a popular temple service devoted to Saivism, though the image and symbols of Siva appear on some of the early Indian coins. But this absence of Saiva temples does not prove that Saivism had no influence as a school of religious thought, for the esoteric Vedic doctrine was always jealously guarded from the vulgar ear by a select body of intellectuals who despised the ignorant superstitions of the masses, and looked upon temple service as unworthy of their high calling.[1]

Saiva temples, built of fine masonry, which evidence the growing popularity of the cult, first began to appear in Southern India about the seventh century A.D., by which time Indo-Aryan culture had taken deep root among the Dravidian or non-Aryan races. It is often assumed that Saivism was an aboriginal superstition adopted by the Brahmans in order to strengthen their influence with the ignorant masses, but the architectural evidence does not support this view. Popular Saivism of the present day has certainly identified itself with a great deal of primitive Indian superstitions, but the esoteric teaching of the cult and the form of its architectural expression are both as purely Indo-Aryan as the Vedas themselves. The simplest form in which the Saiva temple first appears, about the sixth century A.D., is shown in the little monolithic Dūrgā shrine

[1] Even at the present day Brahmans serving in temples are regarded as an inferior caste.

at Māmallapuram, near Madras, now known as Arjuna's Rath—the war-car of Arjuna.

The stūpa, as the symbol of the Lord of Death, Siva, was venerated by the Saivas as much as it was by the Jains and Buddhists, the only distinction being that the former did not use it as a reliquary, for relic-worship formed no part of Brahman ritual. The chief difference between the Saiva and Buddhist shrine is that the former is square or octagonal in plan—a cubical cell being the usual Brahmanical symbol for the cosmos [1]—while the latter is circular, or wheel-shaped, the equivalent Buddhist symbol.

The fact that the cubical cell was intended either for the spiritual exercises of a living Yogi or for an image of the deity conditioned the size of it, so the builders, in their endeavours to give height and importance to the shrine, were constrained to pile replicas of it one over the other, gradually diminishing in size so as to form a pyramidal structure. In this case it is a three-storied shrine, the topmost crowned by a solid stūpa dome. Miniature cubicles are placed at the four corners of the terraced roofs, with a rectangular cell in the middle of each side intended for an image in a recumbent pose, like the Buddha in his last sleep of Pari-Nirvāna,[2] or for the ascetic dormitory of a living Yogi.

There is very little difference between the structure of the "Dravidian" dome and that of the Buddhist stūpa-shrine seen at Ajantā. Both are closely related to the ribbed dome of the fire-shrine—probably formed of skins stretched on a wooden or bambu framework—

[1] Derived from the ancient idea that the world was square, the sky being supported on four pillars.

[2] If the shrine were Brahmanical, it would be for the analogous figure of Vishnu, as Nārāyana, slumbering under the cosmic waters in the coils of the great serpent, Ananta, a symbol for the Milky Way.

PLATE XXII



SIVA TEMPLES, MĀMALLAPURAM

which is shown on the eastern gateway of Sānchī (Pl. XXI, B). This belongs to a Brahmanical forest hermitage where the Buddha is said to have performed a miracle, thereby converting a thousand Brahmanical fire-worshippers. According to the Buddhist legend,[1] the shrine was tenanted by a five-headed serpent. In all probability we have here an exact representation of an ancient Vedic forest-shrine, where the sacred fire which served the Aryan homestead was guarded by Brahman hermits, and where the graven image of the serpent was worshipped as an appropriate emblem of the Fire-Spirit. For just as the bull was regarded in ancient Babylonian ritual as a symbol of the sun ploughing his way across the heavens, so here we find the deadly earth reptile taken as a symbol of the heavenly serpent manifesting itself in various forms, either as the lightning—which is always represented in Indian pictures by serpentine lines of gold—or as the Milky Way, the great serpent or dragon of eternity which enfolds the earth in its coils. On the slopes of the Himālayas, where these forest hermits dwelt, the fiery serpent is even now often seen at night, as it is described in the Vedic hymns, rushing through the woods "tossing his flames about like running streams of water,"[2] and leaving his sinuous fiery trail upon the mountain-side.

This was, perhaps, the deity whom the Aryans personified as Rudra, "the Roarer," who again was so closely identified with the Siva of Vedic times, the Spirit of the snow-mountain, that eventually the two were worshipped as one. The Sānchī sculpture, therefore, probably shows us a primitive Saiva shrine, the proto-

[1] See *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, by A. Foucher. English translation by L. A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas, p. 97.

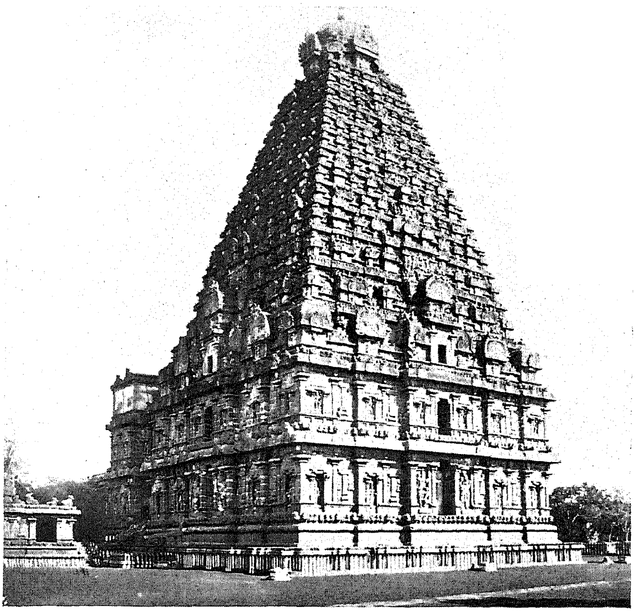
[2] Rig-Veda, I, lxvi. 5.

type of the monolithic shrine at Māmallapuram and of the so-called Dravidian temple.

The stūpa dome at Ajantā, in the structural form of which it is a copy, would have been made on the same principle as modern Persian bulbous domes (Pl. XLI, B), derived from Buddhist stūpas, with internal wooden ties arranged like the spokes of a wheel. Symbolically, the difference between the Saiva and Buddhist dome is that the finial of the former is the *kalasha*, or jar of immortality, of the latter the reliquary and the royal umbrella. An extension or slight modification of the Saiva principle of design produced the mighty pyramidal shrines of Southern India, which in the mind of the devout stood for Siva's Himālayan paradise, Mount Kailāsa, just as the towering mass of the sikhara type was a symbol of Vishnu's holy mountain. On the seashore at Māmallapuram there are two adjoining temples (Pl. XXII) which illustrate the interchange of symbolism frequently occurring in Indian temple architecture; for though both temples are of Saiva design, the smaller of the two, a five-storied one, is now dedicated to Vishnu. At the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century a great Vaishnava movement, headed by Rāmanūja, swept over Southern India, and in this period older Saiva temples were appropriated to the Vaishnava cult, and new temples, like the Vaikuntha Perumāl temple at Conjīveram (Kānchī), were built according to the Saiva tradition, but dedicated to Vishnu. In the same way the Vaishnava sikhara temples of Northern India were appropriated by the Saiva cult, as we have already noticed.

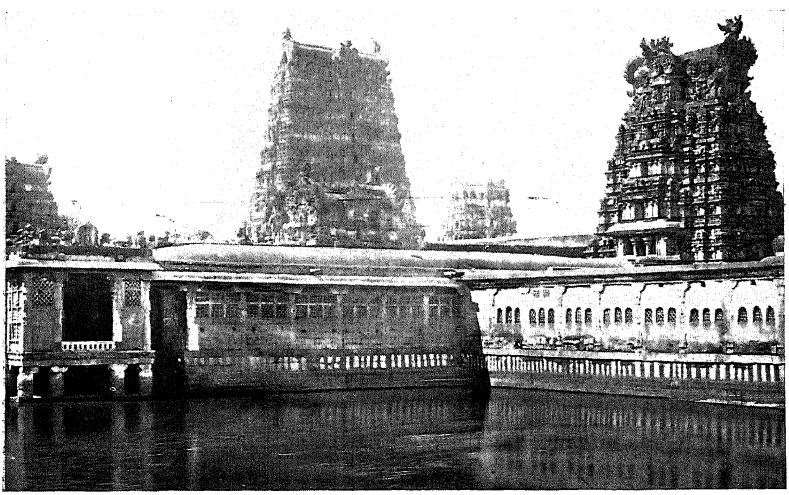
Fergusson, in his academic classification of Indian architectural styles, labels the Saiva temples of Southern India " Dravidian," and the Vaishnava temples of the

Plate XXIIIa



TOWER OF THE GREAT TEMPLE, TANJORE

Plate XXIIIb



GOLDEN LOTUS POOL, MADURA

North "Indo-Aryan," in spite of his assumption that both were indigenous forms borrowed by the Brahmans, and therefore of non-Aryan origin. This misleading description has unfortunately become a fixed archæological tradition, to the utter confusion of students of Indo-Aryan civilisation.

Saiva temples are mostly "Dravidian," or South Indian, simply because the Saivas are in the great majority in the South, while in the North, where Vaishnavas predominate, the Vaishnava form of temple is the characteristic one.

The geographical distribution of the two main sects of modern Hinduism is in all probability due to the political disturbances caused by the inroads of the Huns and by the Muhammadan conquest. Saivism is and was the especial cult of the Brahmans; Vaishnavism of the Kshatriya or fighting caste. When the Huns, Arabs, Turks, and Mongols carried fire and sword into Northern India, thousands of peaceful Brahman monks and ascetics, whose monasteries were destroyed or desecrated, must have sought refuge south of the Vīndhyas, the mountain range which separates the Dekkan from Northern India. The warlike Kshatriyas remained to fight for the Aryan cause in Aryāvarta. Thus the spires of the Vaishnava temples in Northern India testify to the gallant struggle made by the Kshatriya clans in defence of their holy land, while the lofty pyramids of South Indian temples are witness to the spread of Aryan culture among the Dravidian races.

Saiva or Brahman propaganda began to make headway about the sixth century A.D., when a minister of one of the Pāndyan kings of Madura overthrew the pandits of Hīnayāna Buddhism in the philosophical contests which were the favourite recreation of Indo-

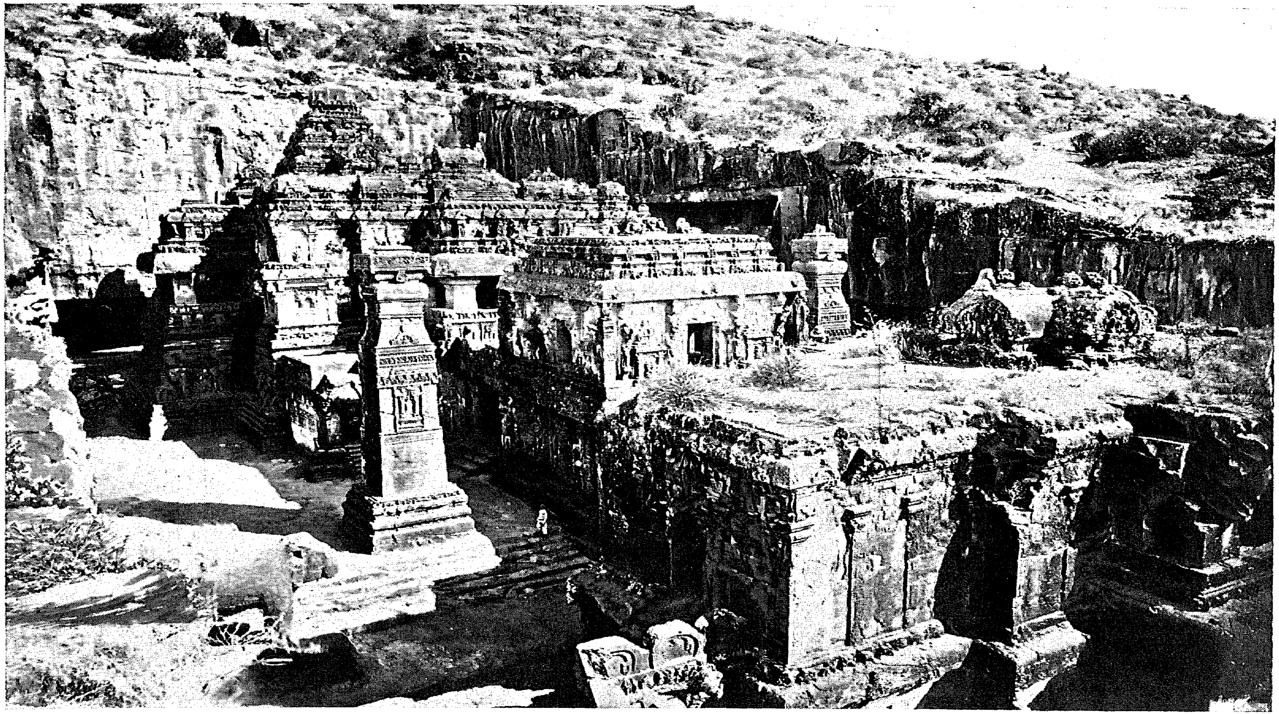
Aryan courts—the main point of issue being the authority and spiritual significance of the Vedas.[1] Several of his successors popularised Saiva teaching and enlisted many non-Brahmans as disciples, so that, like Buddhism, it divested itself of its Brahmanical exclusiveness. It also found great favour in the royal courts of Southern India. At Bādāmi, the ancient capital of the Chalukyan kingdom, there are several Saiva temples of about the seventh century, small in size, but superb in craftsmanship, and distinguished by a noble simplicity of design, for Saiva teaching aimed at a return to the simple living and high thinking of the Vedic Rishis which inspired it. In the eighth century the Saiva temples became grander and more elaborate, for all the great ruling powers of Southern India were its patrons, and vied with each other in the splendour of their public works. Vikramāditya, the last but one of the Chalukyan line, built the great temple of Virūpāksha at Pattadakal, near Bādāmi; the Pallavas at Conjīveram built the Kailāsanatha temple, and sculptured some of the famous Raths at Māmallapuram.

In these two centuries one can trace the gradual evolution of the plan of a Saiva temple, symbolising the palace of the Lord of Death in his Himālayan glacier; but it was at Ellora, not far to the south of Ajantā, and within the territories of the Chalukyan kings,[2] that the royal craftsmen of India, with amazing technical skill and fertility of invention, perfected their ideal in the rock-cut temple of Kailāsa, which repeats on a grander and more elaborate scale the scheme of the structural temple at Pattadakal. Ellora, as before mentioned, is one of the most holy *tirths* (places

[1] See *History of Aryan Rule in India*, by the Author (Harrap), p. 218.

[2] It is now within the dominions of H.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad.

PLATE XXIV



KAILĀSA TEMPLE, ELLORA

of pilgrimage), especially for Saiva pilgrims, because here a lofty scarp of rock, curved like Siva's moon-crest, faces the setting sun. In the rainy season a torrent flows at its foot and a great cascade pours over in front, so that the pilgrims can pass along a ledge behind it and bathe in the falling spray, believing that it is Gangā's holy stream falling over the great God's brow. For over a mile in length this scarp of rock is carved into monasteries and temples belonging to different sects, among the earliest being the Buddhist Visvakarma stūpa-house already described (Pl. XII, B).

The Kailāsa temple was commenced by Krishna I, of the Rāshtrakūta dynasty, about A.D. 760 to glorify his Ishta-devata, or patron deity, who had helped him to victory and given him supreme sovereignty over the Dekkan. How long it took to complete this stupendous sculpture history does not record; the main part of it probably occupied most of the two and a half centuries the dynasty lasted, and some of the accessories were added later. Krishna's capital was at Bādāmi, so the choice of the Pattadakal temple as a model was a natural one. Technically the Kailāsa temple is almost unique among the great rock-cut monuments of India, for instead of making a horizontal excavation into a hill-side, as was the case at Ajantā, or carving detached masses of rock as at Māmallapuram, Krishna's master-masons cut down into the sloping hill-side from above, quarrying a pit varying in depth from 160 feet to about 50 feet, and leaving in the middle of it a detached mass of rock from which they sculptured a full-sized double-storied temple—solid at the base, but with the first floor completed internally and externally—its vimāna, or shrine, 96 feet in height, and the assembly-hall about 53 feet square, with sixteen sculptured pillars arranged in groups of four to support

the solid mass of the roof. The three sides of the deep pit which formed the temple courtyard were subsequently carved into pillared cloisters, which provided a richly sculptured procession path, and a series of splendid chapels, from whose dimly-lit recesses Siva's snow-white palace could be seen glittering in the sunlight, for the sculpture, as usual, was finished with a fine coat of highly polished chunam.

Passing through the gopuram,[1] with its walls battlemented like the entrance of a royal palace (Pl. XXIV), one passes over a bridge to a detached two-storied shrine dedicated to Siva's bull, Nandi, and placed at the entrance to the main courtyard. On either side a stately carved monolith, nearly 50 feet high, serving as the ensign of royalty, bears Siva's trident, the symbol of his threefold qualities,[2] on the summit.

The bull is the symbol of Siva as the Creator, connecting the Saiva with those traditions of very remote antiquity when the year began with the sun's entrance into the constellation of Taurus, which was worshipped as the bull ploughing his way among the stars. There was a tradition current in Babylonia that the human race was born under Taurus, and we have seen already how the Buddhists adopted the same zodiacal sign to mark the Nativity of the Buddha (p. 32). The bull is also sacred because he wears Siva's moon-crest on his head. Nandi in the Saiva ritual corresponds to Brahmā the Creator. His shrine, like Brahmā's, has doors on all four sides facing the cardinal points. In the great Siva temple at Elephanta a splendid image

[1] Literally "cow fort," a name no doubt derived from the gateways of the ancient Aryan village, where armed sentinels watched the cattle on the common grazing-ground under the walls.

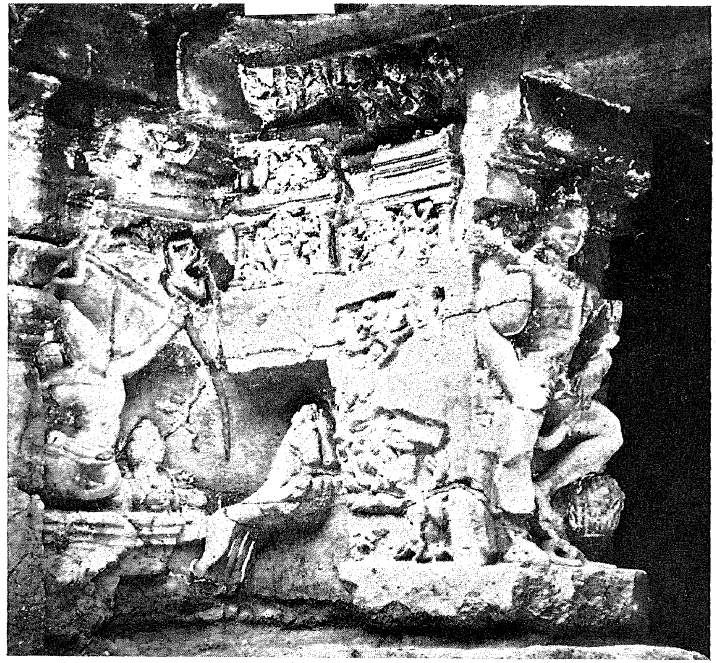
[2] The three *gunas*—sattvam, rajas, and tamas.

PLATE XXVA



SIVA AND PARVATI, KAILĀSA

PLATE XXVB



SIVA AS SUN-GOD, KAILĀSA

of Brahmā with four heads took the place of the Creator.[1]

The Nandi shrine is connected by another bridge with the front porch of the main temple through which the worshipper can pass through the great assembly-hall and circumambulate the holy of holies, where Siva's symbol, the Lingam, is enshrined, passing by the five smaller shrines grouped round it on the terrace. They are now empty, but the first on the north side belonged to Ganēsha, the god of reason and worldly reason, who must always be first invoked before the Divine Spirit is addressed. Next, at the north-east corner, was the shrine of Bhairava, or Rudra—Siva in his tamasic aspect as the Universal Destroyer. The third, immediately behind the holy of holies, was dedicated to Parvati, Siva's *sakti*, or nature-force, personified by Himālaya's fair daughter who once in spring-time, when the snows melt and the mountain side begins to blossom, drew by her prayers the Great God from meditation in His icy cell and became His bride.

The fourth cell belonged to Chanda, the scavenging deity, who purifies the foulness caused by the processes of involution, and thereby prepares the way for another turn of the wheel of life. Lastly came the shrine of the Sapta-Mātris, the seven Mothers, or Powers, of Creation.

The pyramidal tower of the central shrine, as will be seen in Pl. XXVI, is similar in design to the five-storied temple on the sea-shore at Māmallapuram (Pl. XXII), but more elaborately sculptured. The roof of the antarāla, the vestibule before the shrine reserved for the priests, rises above the terraced roof of the assembly-hall, and, as is usually the case with the sikhara type of temple also, its gable is filled by a

[1] See Pl. LX, B.

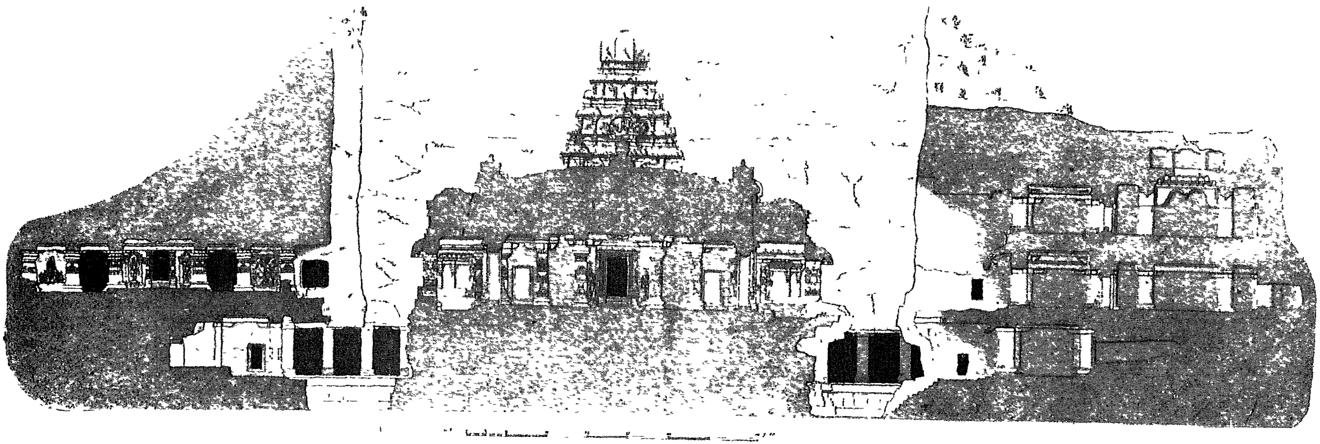
large sun-window, originally intended to illuminate the shrine, but here filled by an image of Siva seated in yogi attitude with the right hand raised in the gesture of teaching.[1] This is one of the many points in which Saiva and Buddhist iconography correspond.

From the level of the inner courtyard the solid plinth upon which the temple rests can be seen (Pl. XXVII, A). It is about 27 feet high, and sculptured with a whole herd of elephants, as if supporting the temple on their backs, showing the characteristics of the noble beasts with consummate art and with an amazing effect of monumental dignity. It goes round the whole length of the main temple with its assembly-hall, only interrupted by the porches on the north, south, and west sides, which at the ground level are filled with sculpture illustrating legends from Saiva mythology. Under the southern porch, which was formerly connected with the chapel on the opposite side of the courtyard, there is a fine panel (Pl. XXVII) telling the story from the Rāmāyana of Rāvana's impious attempt to remove Kailāsa to Ceylon. Worsted in the fight with Rāma and his monkey allies, Rāvana flew in his magic car to Kailāsa, and in order to force the Great God to come to his aid, began to undermine the mountain, hoping to carry it off on his back. Parvati felt the ground tremble, and her attendants fled in dismay. She clutched Siva's arm to rouse him from his meditation; but He who knows the past, present, and future, only pressed down His foot and held the ten-armed demon-king a prisoner in the dungeon he had made for himself, where he remained a thousand years until he had expiated his crime by repentance.

For the pilgrim the outer circumambulation of

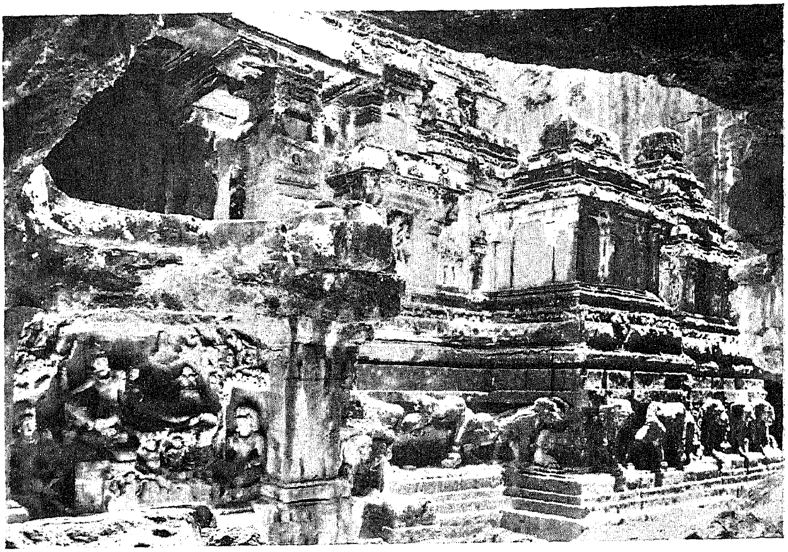
[1] *Dharma-chakra-mudra.*

PLATE XXVI



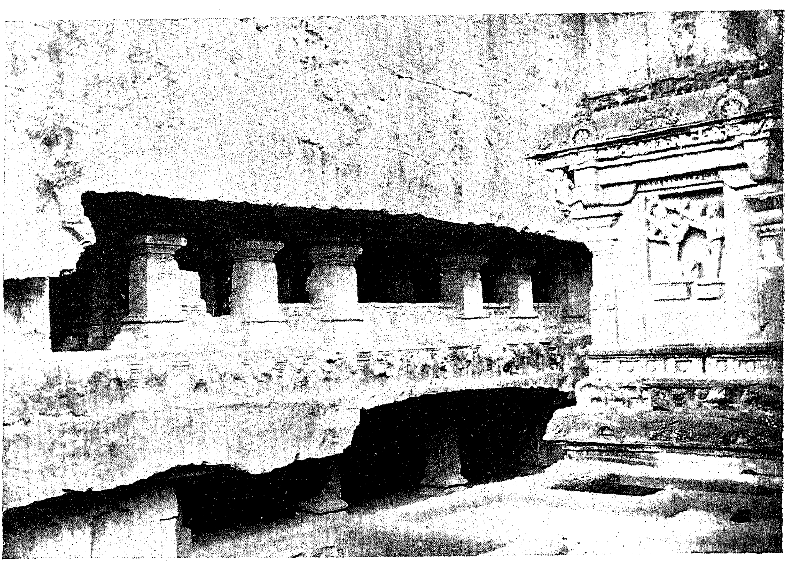
TRANSVERSE SECTION, KAILĀSA PTEMLE, ELLORA

PLATE XXVIIA



SCULPTURED PLINTH, KAILĀSA TEMPLE

PLATE XXVIIB



LANKĒSHVARA CHAPEL, KAILĀSA TEMPLE, ELLORA

Siva's paradise began at the north-west corner, near the entrance gopuram, where a beautiful two-storied shrine, dedicated to the holy rivers of Hindustan which are supposed to spring from the Great God's hair, is carved in the face of the rock. Gangā occupies the centre with a crocodile-dragon at her feet. On her right is Sarāsvati with a lotus flower as her pedestal. Jumna on the left stands on a tortoise. Other streams which fertilise Aryāvarta's sacred soil are symbolised in the seven sculptured panels on the architrave above, and by the water-jars ornamenting the balcony of the upper chamber, which is only partially excavated. A pair of life-size elephants, symbols of the rain-clouds which often gather round the Himālayan snowy peaks, stand at the foot of the flight of steps leading to the inner courtyard. There three long cloisters cut into the faces of the rock form the ambulatory of the temple, filled with sculpture, as were the procession paths of Buddhist stūpas, for the edification of the pilgrim. Opposite the north and south porches of the assembly-hall the rock is more deeply recessed, to mark what in a structural temple would have been two towering gopurams. Above the northern recess a spacious chapel 75 feet long and 50 feet wide, known as the Lankēsvara,[1] is carved still deeper into the rock, nearly on a level with the assembly-hall of the temple. This chapel was an addition of a later date, though doubtless contemplated in the original scheme. The noble simplicity of its massive piers, the broad surface of smoothly dressed stone above it, and the mysterious gloom of its dark recesses, make a wonderful foil to the temple itself, coruscating jewel-like in the sunlight, and elaborated with the finesse of chased silver-work. Opposite the chapel, on the south side of the court, a

[1] See Pl. XXVII, on the left.

series of monastic halls or chapels rises in three stories above the cloisters.[1] This was never completed, but the intention was to cut right through to the upper surface of the rock so as to form a skylight in the top story.

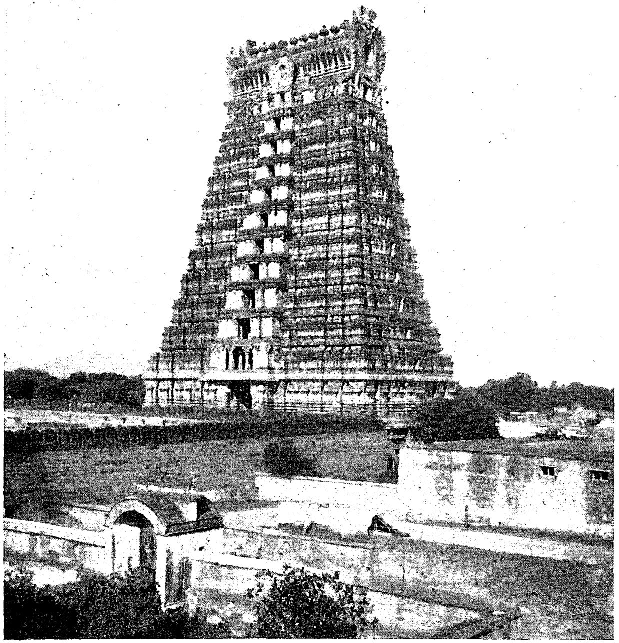
The great bathing-tank, which is a striking feature in many other popular Indian shrines (see Pl. XXIII, B), is wanting at Ellora, because the pilgrims performed their necessary ablutions at the water-fall or in the stream which flows at the foot of the hill.

Probably this marvellous temple remained the chief centre of Saiva worship in the Dekhan until the thirteenth century, when the Muhammadans, having conquered the greater part of Hindustan, broke through the great barrier of the Vīndhya mountains and forced the Brahman monks and temple craftsmen to seek the protection of the Hindu courts farther south. But the design of the Kailāsa at Ellora remained for all time the perfect model of a Sivālaya—the temple craftsman's vision of Siva's wondrous palace in His Himālayan glacier, which no mortal can ever reach, where in His Yogi's cell the Lord of the Universe, the Great Magician, controls the cosmic forces by the power of thought; the holy rivers, creating life in the world below, enshrined in His matted locks; Parvati, His other Self—the Universal Mother, watching by His side.

Whenever a Siva temple is found crowned by Vishnu's sikhara, instead of by the pyramidal stūpa-tower, it is either because a Vaishnava temple has been appropriated by the Saiva cult, or because in that temple Siva is worshipped in his Sattvic aspect—i.e., as Vishnu the Preserver. This frequently occurs in Northern India, but it is very rarely the case in the Dravidian or southern country, the great stronghold

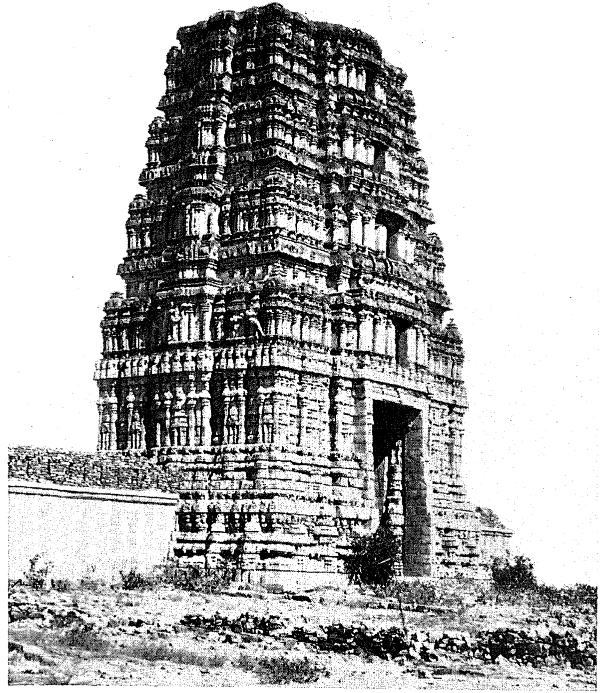
[1] See Pl. XXVII, on the right.

PLATE XXVIIIA



GOPURAM, SRIVILLIPUTTUR, TINNEVELLY

PLATE XXVIIIB



GOPURAM, GANDIKOTA, CUDDAPAH

of Saivism. The design of all the great temples of Southern India is always based upon the Kailāsa type, even when Vishnu instead of Siva is worshipped, as in the Vaikuntha Perumāl temple Conjīveram and the Vitthalaswāmi temple at Vijayanagar, with variations dictated by the necessities of the site or other practical considerations. Few of them, however, are built after a complete symmetrical plan, like the Kailāsa at Ellora, for in most cases they are an aggregation of temples and of two or more enclosures; so that, instead of a palace for the King of the Universe, the original temple has grown into a city of the gods—the principle of design being the same as that which is seen in the Sānchī stūpa—to preserve the sanctity of an ancient shrine by enclosing it in another of a similar but more elaborate design, instead of pulling it down and rebuilding it on a larger scale. In this way the magnificent outer gateways, or gopurams, of South Indian temples became the dominant features of South Indian temple architecture instead of the tower of the holy of holies, for each additional enclosure required gopurams proportionate to its size, and many of these stately gopurams vie with the famous Rajput towers of victory in the beauty of their design. The Tanjore temple is one of the few which, like the Kailāsa at Ellora, is an architectural unity, built after a preconceived plan. It was erected about A.D. 1000 by the great Chola Emperor Rājarāja I, to celebrate the victories by which he became paramount ruler of the Dekhan and Southern India, including Ceylon. Here the principal shrine (Pl. XXIII, A) is built on a colossal scale; it is 82 feet square and crowned by a stūpa-tower of thirteen stories 190 feet high.

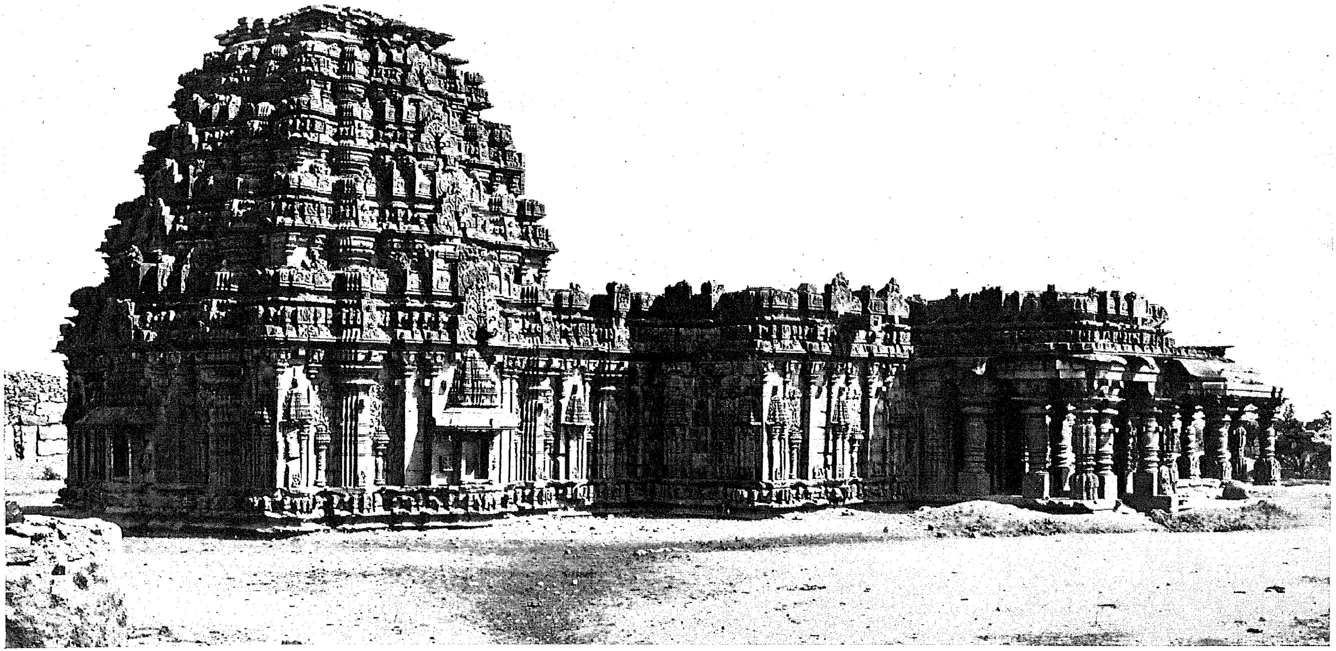
These cities of the gods in Southern India are especially interesting, because, like the sacred cities of

the Jains before described, they reproduce in their scheme the main features of the ancient Aryan town-plan as described in the canonical books of the Indian craftsman, the Silpa-Sāstras. The inner temple represents the king's palace and council-house approached by the two main thoroughfares, the Rājapatha, or King's street, and the Vāmanapatha, Short or South street. The bazaars, bathing places, debating-halls, public orchards, city walls and gates are all indicated in the lay-out of the great South Indian temples, each one of which should have a separate monograph.

When the distinction in symbolism between the typical Saiva and Vaishnava temples is understood, it will not be difficult to follow the evolution of the architecture of the two great cults of modern Hinduism, for the study of which a great mass of material is available. We must now briefly consider a third architectural group which, after Fergusson, has been classified archæologically as Chalukyan, because its geographical distribution approximately corresponds to the territories of the Chalukyan kings who ruled in the Dekhan from about the seventh to the end of the twelfth centuries A.D. This name is unsatisfactory, because the style did not begin with the Chalukyan dynasty, nor was it exclusively characteristic of the temples built under its patronage. Fergusson states that the Chalukyan style was naturally evolved from the Dravidian, i.e. the orthodox Saiva, type of temple. But this is hardly correct, as the design of the temples included in this category was a compromise between the "Dravidian" pyramidal stūpa-tower of the Saiva type, and the "Indo-Aryan" curvilinear sikhara of the Vaishnava type.

We have noticed already that the two great schools of Indian religious thought, the Saiva and Vaishnava,

PLATE XXIX



VISHNU-SIVA TEMPLE, ITTAGI

have many ideas in common. Both adhered to the doctrine of the Trimūrti, the Hindu Trinity. Siva to the Saivas was Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva. Vishnu to the Vaishnavas was the same. It is therefore very usual to find an image of Vishnu in a temple of the Saiva type and vice versa. Though the victorious war-lord built his royal chapel in honour of the deity he worshipped, the design of the temple-builders reflected the religious movements of the times, rather than the fortunes of rival dynasties. One might therefore expect that the attempts made by religious reformers to reconcile points of controversy would find expression in the development of temple architecture. The early Vaishnava movement in Northern India is recorded architecturally in the sikharas of the so-called "Indo-Aryan style," and the early Saiva movement in Southern India is the stūpa-tower of the "Dravidian style." Similarly the Vaishnava movement of mediæval times, of which Rāmanūja was the most prominent exponent, left its mark upon the temple architecture of the Dekhan and Southern India, which were the chief fields of his mission. The "Chalukyan" is a style in which the symbolism of the sikhara and stūpa are joined in one temple tower. The stūpa-dome of the Dravidian type crowns it, often carved as if to simulate the lotus-fruit cup which distinguishes the sikhara temple spire. The tower itself resembles the Vaishnava sikhara—the "bell" of the lotus with turned-down petals. It seems that the builders would make the temple stones declare that Siva is Vishnu and Vishnu Siva. In the temple plan also the trefoil form of the holy of holies emphasised the doctrine of the Three Aspects of the One.

The other characteristics of the style specified by Fergusson are mere variations in technique dictated

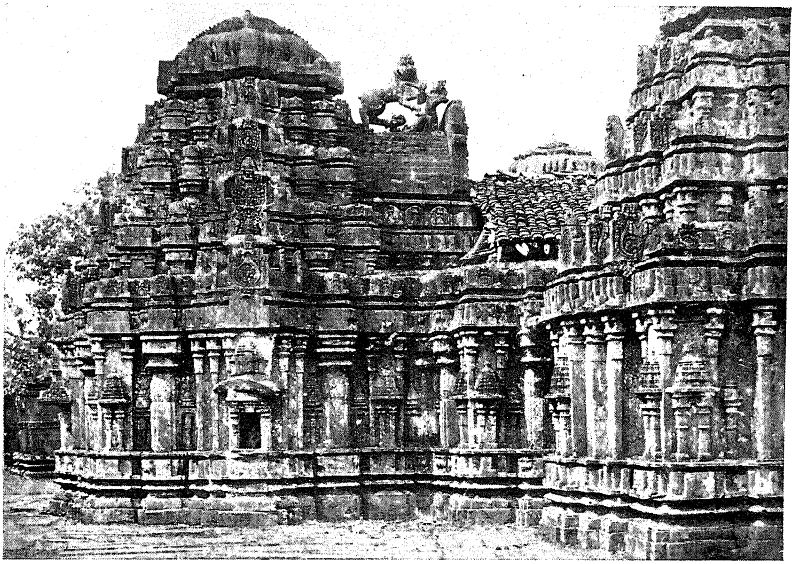
by local craft conditions or by the inventive fancy of the builder.

Though this form of a temple shrine probably originated with the Vaishnava movement in the Dekhan, it did not, once it was established in the canons of the master-builder, retain a strictly sectarian character. Like the other two types, it was used by different sects —a characteristic of Indian temple-building which has often led to disputes regarding ownership. And though Rāmanūja's name may be associated with it, just as Sankarāchārya's name is connected with the Saiva movement, the "Chalukyan style" began to evolve several centuries before Rāmanūja's appearance in the eleventh century, for the Vaishnava doctrine of qualified monism, preached by Rāmanūja in opposition to the Advāita doctrine of the Vedanta, had its exponents centuries before his birth.

The Saiva temple of Ittagi (Pl. XXIX), about twenty-one miles E.N.E. from Gadag in Hyderabad, built about the time of Rāmanūja, and typical of the style, is one of the most beautiful examples of mediæval architecture in the Dekhan. The decorative work is superbly rich and finished in execution, but it is not over-elaborated with the wild profusion of the later decadent architecture of Halebīd. Like many other temples of the period, it is remarkable for the absence of figure sculpture, the niches designed for images being mostly empty or filled with aniconic symbols. In this respect also the temples tell the religious history of the times, for many Hindu teachers—Jain, Saiva, and Vaishnava—taught the vanity of idolatry, and refused it the place in religious ritual which popular superstition gave to it.

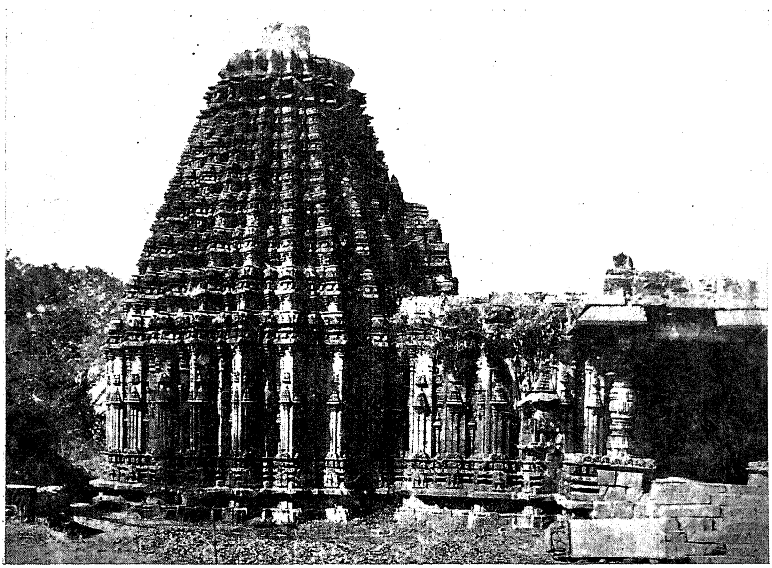
The crowning member of the tower, the stūpa symbol, and the roofs of the mandapams in the Ittagi

PLATE XXXA



VISHNU-SIVA TEMPLE, BALAGĀMĪ

PLATE XXXB



VISHNU-SIVA TEMPLE, GADAG

temple have disappeared. Another Saiva temple, at Balagāmi (Pl. XXX, A), in the north of Mysore, also of the eleventh century, has the tower of the shrine intact. The heraldic lion and figure on the top of the roof of the antarāla was the ensign of the famous Hoysala Ballāla dynasty of Mysore, one of the most powerful in the Chalukyan country from about A.D. 1000 to 1300.

The name of one of the master-builders of the Hoysala court, Jakanāchārya, has been recorded, and many of the Mysore temples have been attributed to him. Followers of Fergusson, like Dr. Vincent Smith, now distinguish a Hoysala Ballāla style as a sub-variety of the "Chalukyan"; but this dynastic system of temple classification which takes no account of the religious character of the building must always be unsatisfactory, if not misleading, to the student of Indian art history, for it leaves untold all that the temple craftsmen have revealed of their craft-ritual and of the spiritual impulses of the times.

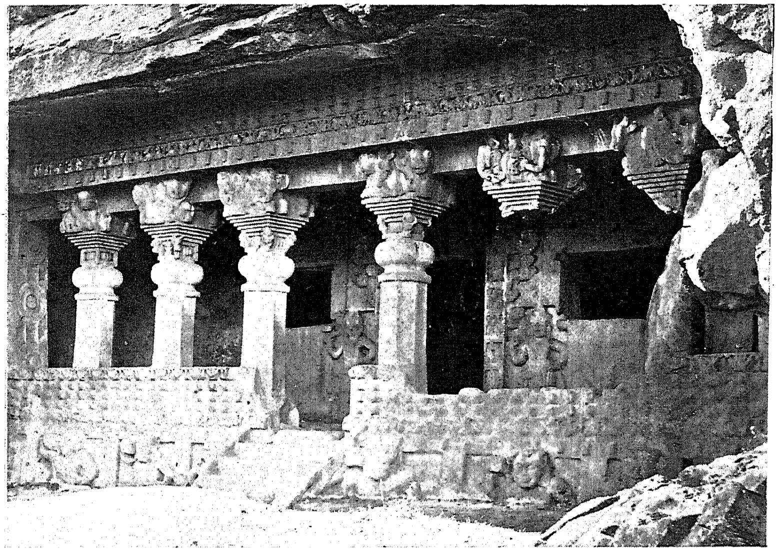
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CHAPTER VIII

THE MONASTERY, MANDAPAM, AND PALACE

THOUGH we first meet with the monastery in the dwellings of the Buddha's fraternity called the Sangha —the Community—after the name of the Aryan clan organisation, monasticism was an institution deeply rooted in Indian life, even in Vedic times, though Sākya-Mūni, perhaps, was the first to put it on a fully organised footing. And just as he ordered the deliberations of the Sangha after the traditions of the Aryan popular assembly, so the plan of the monastery, the Sangharāma, or abode of the Sangha, followed the simple but eminently practical arrangement of the Aryan joint-family house, which down to the present day has remained the typical plan of a well-to-do Indian home. It consists of three or more sets of apartments grouped round a central courtyard, square or oblong in shape, with a verandah in front, on either side of the entrance, and others round three sides of the courtyard. In the front verandah, facing the road, the men of the household can sit and transact business or pass round the hookah to their male friends, while the inner courtyard gives the necessary privacy, fresh air, and protection from the glaring sun which are essential for the comfort and health of the family. In the Indian village the courtyard serves as a shelter for the ryot's cattle by night, as it also did in the primitive

PLATE XXXIA



GAUTAMA PUTRA MONASTERY, NĀSIK

PLATE XXXIB



MONASTERY AT AURANGABAD

life of Vedic times, when it was sacrificial ground. Here the head of the household lit the sacred fire, undisturbed by unclean intruders, and conducted the religious ceremonies at which the services of a Brahman priest are now indispensable.

None of the early Buddhist structural monasteries now exist, no doubt because they were generally built of wood and thatch; but the splendid rock-cut monastery at Nāsik, dating about the second century A.D., has exactly the same plan as the typical Indian house of to-day, when it is not planned after European models. Pl. XXXI, A, shows the verandah with its sculptured pillars of nearly the same design as those of the Kārlē chapter-house, and the entrance doorway richly carved, as is usual in all Indian homes of the better class.

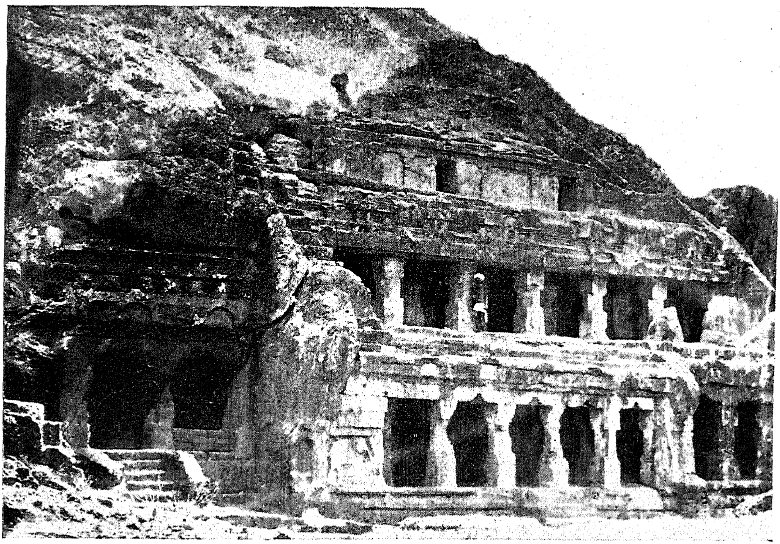
Inside the courtyard stone benches running round the three sides in front of the cells take the place of the inner verandahs, which are superfluous in a rock-cut monastery. The same plan is followed at Ajantā, Ellora, and elsewhere, only in the Mahāyāna monasteries a shrine for the sacred image is added on the side facing the entrance. When the size of the courtyard, or assembly-hall, was increased, it became necessary to leave massive piers to support the rock above, and these were then as lavishly sculptured as the verandah pillars outside. The noble hall of the rock-cut monasteries at Aurangabad which is shown in Pl. XXXI, B, though it lacks the fresco paintings on the ceilings and walls which have made the Ajantā monasteries famous, in the exquisite design of its sculptured decoration it is unsurpassed by other work of the Ajantā school to which it belongs. It is dated about the seventh century A.D.

The monasteries were the universities of ancient and mediæval India, which attracted students from all

civilised Asia, and spread Buddhist and Hindu learning far and wide, both in the East and West. The rock-cut monuments of Ajantā, Ellora, Aurangabad, and other places enable us to understand the splendour to which Indian universities, such as Taksasīla, Benares, and Nālanda, attained when Mahāyana Buddhism relaxed the ascetic rules of its great Teacher and their Abbots were the Lords Spiritual, whose authority the War-lords of the Five Indies did not dare to dispute. The excavations now in progress on the site of Nālanda[1] will surely bring in a rich harvest of archæological treasures and show the detailed planning of the great monastery, which is described in outline by Hiuen Tsang; but they will not restore its lofty towers, which, in Hiuen Tsang's flowery language, seemed "like pointed hill-tops, lost in the mists of the morning," nor its shady groves and gardens, with lotus pools and mango orchards, where the ten thousand monks and scholars took their recreation. The viharas of five stories, with "soaring domes and pinnacles," seem to have been like the pyramidal towers of which a sculptured monolithic model exists at Māmallapuram (Pl. XXXII, B). It is arranged on the same principle as the tower of the Siva temple. Four pillared pavilions gradually diminishing in size are piled one over the other, the three upper ones being surrounded by rows of monastic cells, the cubical ones for meditation and study in the day-time, the oblong ones used as dormitories. The topmost pavilion is octagonal and is crowned by the stūpa-dome. This was no doubt "the upper room" which was accorded to scholars of distinction. This type of college building, which

[1] The modern Barāgāon, close to Rājagriha, which was the capital of Magadha in the days of the Buddha, and thirty-four miles from Pātaliputra, the modern Patna.

PLATE XXXIIA



MONASTERY, UNDAVALLI

PLATE XXXIIB



MODEL OF MONASTERY, MĀMALLAPURAM

seems to have been common in India in the seventh century, fits in with the classification of the scholars at Nālanda given by Hiuen Tsang: first, those who were proficient in ten philosophical works, who were naturally the most numerous; second, those who had graduated in thirty; third, a select number, including the Master of the Law himself, who knew fifty works; and lastly the learned Abbot, Sīlabhadra, who was reputed master of every work which had any bearing on knowledge of the Right Law.

A sixth-century sculptured monastery of a similar type is shown in Pl. XXXII, A. It is at Undavalli, on the right bank of the Krishnā river, not far from Guntur. Structural edifices of the same kind are found in Ceylon and Cambodia. Fergusson suggests a connection between them and the seven-storied temples of Assyria, a conjecture to which much weight has been added by the recently discovered evidences of Aryan rule in the Euphrates valley.

Akbar, the Great Mogul, who revived many Indo-Aryan court traditions in the sixteenth century, built a five-storied pavilion, the Panch Mahall, at Fatehpur Sikri, which is still intact. It was probably intended as a meeting-place for the Dīn Ilāhī, the imperial Order he instituted, which, like the Buddhist Sangha, had four grades or degrees. Akbar, as Grand Master of the Order, would have taken his seat in the "upper room" under the canopy.

Of Nālanda's lofty walled enclosure, 1,600 feet long, divided into eight courts, one may find the modern counterpart in the walls and gopurams and quadrangles of South Indian temples. The dragon-pillared pavilions, "painted red and richly chiselled," where the scholars exercised their wits in philosophical disputations, one can see in many temple mandapams, the durbar-halls

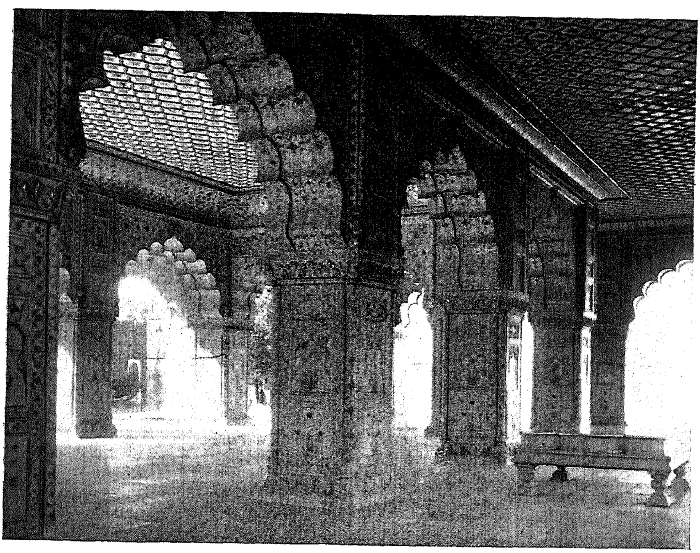
of the gods, and in Indian palaces. Discussions on philosophical and religious questions have been from the earliest times so much a part of Indian social and religious life that every village had its debating-hall, if only a temporary *pandal* of bambu and matting or a venerable "tree of wisdom"—a banyan or a pipal—under whose branches the elders gathered in the evening to listen to wandering sādhus defending their theories of the universe, or to disciples of a great teacher travelling from *toll* to *toll*, and from court to court, to win converts for their master's cause—for even the common people took an intelligent interest in the great problems of life which occupied all the thoughts of the monk and scholar. In the towns and at the royal courts a contest between philosophical champions was as much an entertainment for a great wedding feast or for a state ceremonial as it was a recreation for the scholars of a Sanskrit *toll* or university. And the quinquennial parliament of religions, when under royal auspices thousands of representatives of different schools from all the universities of the land met with high solemnity to adjust disputes or to listen to the thesis of some famous master of philosophy—a Sankarāchārya or Rāmanūja, who had already won his spurs in a hundred fights—was an event in Indian public life like the grandest tournaments of European chivalry, which roused the greatest excitement and became a landmark in history. Such great combats might last for days or weeks, and when finally the end came, and "letters of victory" were given to the successful disputant as a record of his triumph, his opponents would often be beside themselves with grief and rage, and the exultant victor sometimes so far forgot his philosophic dignity as to throw dust upon them in token of his contempt.

PLATE XXXIIIA



VITTALASWĀMI TEMPLE, VIJAYANAGAR

PLATE XXXIIIB



DIWĀN-I-KHĀS, DELHI
(*Photo by Johnston & Hoffman*)

When the assembly- or debating-hall took so great a part in civic life and state ceremonial, one can understand why the craftsmen spared no pains in its construction and ornamentation. The roof was generally very massive—sometimes with a hollow chamber to protect from the tropical sun. The deep curved cornices to which awnings were attached helped to screen from dust and glare. The designing and arrangement of the pillars and the ornamenting of the massive timber or stonework of the roof, always kept within the range of the old Vedic tradition, gave ample scope for the imagination and skill of the builders. The pillar always remained in the craftsman's mind as the mystic lotus-tree rooted in the depths of the cosmic ocean, blossoming in the highest heavens and keeping the balance of the universe. The roof was the dome of the world, Vishnu's blue lotus flower, with the sun as its golden pericarp; or Brahmā's lotus, whose rosy petals were the robes of the dawn-maiden; or Siva's moon-lotus, which opens in the night, the aura of the Lord of Death as he sits absorbed in thought or dances the dance of the cosmic rhythm among the stars, the great serpent of eternity coiled round his arms.

Sometimes the temple mandapams, designed as meeting-places for crowds of pilgrims, were like forest groves, halls of a thousand pillars. Whatever might have been the use to which the mandapam was applied—a debating or royal audience hall, a town hall or parliament house, a pilgrim's hostel or place for religious ceremonies—the mystery of the primeval forest, in whose depths the Vedic Rishi, regardless of its fearsome demons and wild beasts, built his quiet retreat, seems to hang over it. The Indian craftsman's inexhaustible invention and boundless patience

revelled in the task of giving artistic expression to the exuberant beauty of the tropical forest. The magnificent mandapam of the sixteenth century (Pl. XXXIII, A), built by the Kings of Vijayanagar for their royal chapel dedicated to Vishnu, perhaps indicates the highest point to which Indian genius attained in that direction.

This wonderful mandapam may give an idea of the earlier wooden pavilions of Nālanda, with their "pillars ornamented with dragons, beams resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow—rafters richly carved—columns ornamented with jade painted red and richly chiselled," as Hiuen Tsang described it. The later work of the same school in Southern India, however astonishing it may be technically, begins to run wild and often loses all artistic coherence. But in Northern India the reaction caused by the Muhammadan conquest and the restriction of sculptured ornamentation imposed by the law of Islam created a new school of Indian craftsmen—the so-called Indo-Saracenic—based upon Hindu technical traditions but more rationalistic and worldly in its ideals, though the mysticism of the East still clung to them.

The typical works of this school are the pillared pavilions of Fatehpur Sikri (Pl. XLIX, A) built for Akbar, and the famous private audience hall of Shah Jahān at Delhi (Pl. XXXIII, B), his Elysium on earth of white marble and precious inlay, the exquisite elegance of which is no less remarkable than the gorgeous sculptured beauty of the Vijayanagar temple mandapam built about a century earlier.

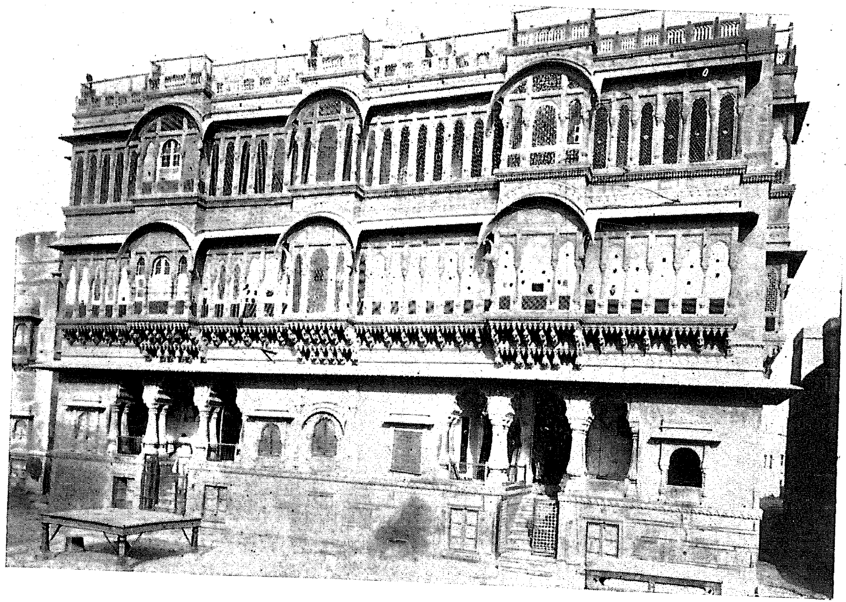
The typical plan of a monastery, as we have seen, reproduced that of the Indo-Aryan joint-family house —a series of chambers grouped round an open court.

Plate XXXIVa



"THE PALACE OF THE GODS," BHARHUT SCULPTURE

Plate XXXIVb



MODERN MANSION, BIKANIR

Of ancient and mediæval monasteries there are many rock-cut examples, and the ruins of Gandhāra present the exact details of their arrangement. The names and dates of many of the royal patrons or wealthy merchants who built and endowed them are recorded. The vast number of temples built or sculptured in successive centuries by Indian kings and princes is also evidenced by countless examples. But with the exception of Asoka's palace at Pātaliputra, the ruins of which have been brought to light recently, there is hardly anything left of architectural importance to show where the royal builders themselves and their retinue lived. The ancient monuments of India are rich in temples, monasteries, and memorials of Buddhist saints. We know fairly accurately the type of building in which the common people lived—it differed in no respect from the abode of the Indian villages of to-day. But one hardly finds a trace of a royal palace or mansion of a great nobleman before Muhammadan times. In early Indian painting and sculpture, when a king is shown in his own home, he is always seated under a mandapam, the Indian royal canopy and audience-hall; the inquisitive eye is not allowed to peer into the private life of the king and his ministers.

The Nītisāra of Sakrāchārya, however, in the first chapter dealing with the duties of princes, gives general directions for the planning of a royal palace. It was to be placed in the midst of the council buildings, to have sides of equal length, "be well adorned with spacious tanks, wells, and water-pumps," and surrounded by fortified walls with four beautiful gates at the cardinal points. The dining-rooms, chapels, baths, kitchens, and wash-houses were to be on the eastern side. Reception-rooms and sleeping apart-

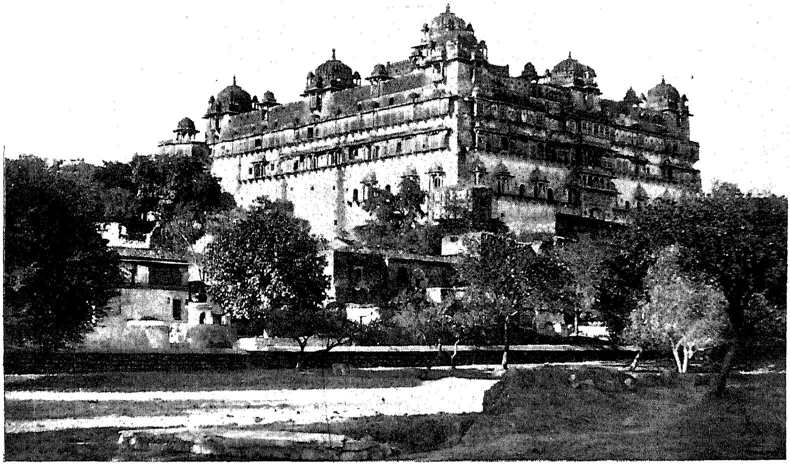
ments, "those for drinking and weeping,"[1] servants' rooms, rooms for keeping and grinding corn, and latrines were to be on the southern side. The armoury, guard-house, gymnasium, storeroom, and study were to be on the north. The court-house and record-room on the north, and the stables on the south.

The council-house should be built of two or three stories, with pavilions on the roof. It should be beautiful and accessible from all directions, with a central hall double the width of the side-rooms, be provided with fountains, musical instruments, clocks, ventilating apparatus, mirrors and pictures. Dwelling-houses for the Ministers, Members of Council, and officials were to be built separately on the north and east.

There are many circumstances which may account for the complete disappearance of the buildings where the great kings of ancient and mediæval India lived and held their court besides the fact that religious sentiment did not protect the deserted palace of an extinct dynasty from spoliation, either by Hindu or Musalman. Unlike the temples and monasteries which were carved in the living rock or built of imperishable materials to consecrate the holy place where they stood, the sites of royal cities were frequently changed owing to political disturbances or the exigencies of warfare. Kings and dynasties disappeared, but the immortal gods remained for ever. There was a certain fitness in the unwritten laws of the king's craftsmen

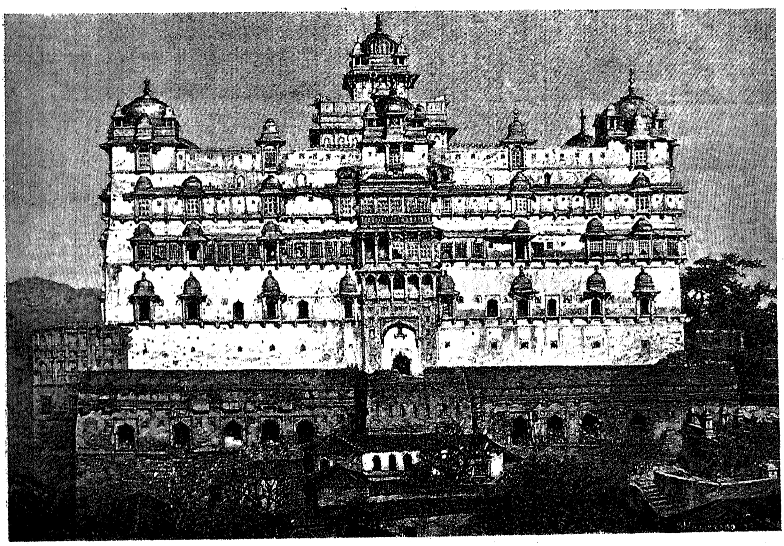
[1] According to an excellent Indian tradition a royal palace should have a special chamber—a grumbling or mourning room—to which the lady of the *zanāna* should retire when she had a grievance or was in distress of mind, so that the harmony of the rest of the household should not be disturbed. The king then, if he wished, could visit the lady in her retreat and redress her grievance or try to bring her consolation.

PLATE XXXVA



PALACE OF BIR SINGH, DATIYĀ

PLATE XXXVB



FRONT OF PALACE OF BIR SINGH, DATIYĀ

which ordained that none but the palaces of the gods should be built of marble or stone—though it is strange that the saintly Asoka's disregard of the rule was not apparently imitated by any of his successors. But it must be remembered that the temple itself was an important adjunct of the royal palace—probably in Vedic times it was the palace itself and the citadel which the Aryan warriors used as their inner line of defence. The cella was the sacrificial chamber of the king, and the mandapam his durbar-hall. Its walls, as we see in the Kailāsa at Ellora, were battlemented and surrounded by chambers which might have been used by the king and his retinue before priestly tradition converted them into monasteries. Its gateways were the guard-rooms for the royal sentinels. The sun-windows which pierced the sides of the temple tower suggest loopholes for the archers of the royal bodyguard. This use of the temples as royal fortresses may partly account for the ruthlessness with which they were destroyed by the Muhammadan invaders. It would also explain why, until gunpowder was generally used in warfare, Indian builders did not find it necessary to use stone for the innumerable accessory buildings of a royal palace—wood and brick sufficed for all practical purposes, and were much more convenient materials. When, however, about the fourteenth century, they began to follow the Muhammadan custom of building the royal residence and the royal chapel separately, the one was built as solidly as the other; and from that time the palaces of Hindu kings provide a distinct and brilliant chapter in Indian architectural history. They are of far greater artistic interest than those of the Great Moguls, which were planned on similar lines and built by the same class of builders, the royal craftsmen of India, though

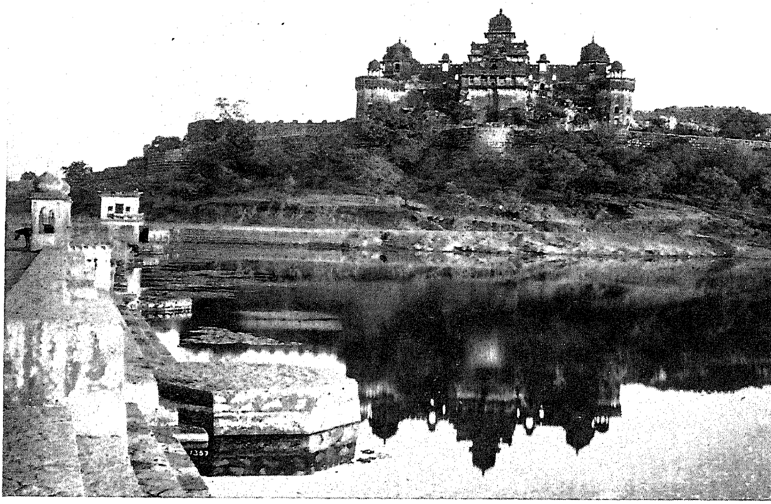
great political events have made the Mogul buildings more famous.

And just as the modern Indian mansion in Rajputana retains the principal features of the building described as the Palace of the Gods in the Bharhut sculptures, so it is clear that the sixteenth and seventeenth century palaces of the Rajput princes were built according to a traditional Hindu plan, and were not mere imitations of the fashions of their foreign rulers.

Perhaps the finest of them is the old palace at Datiyā with its noble exterior, an architectural masterpiece comparable with the Doge's Palace at Venice. It was built in the beginning of the seventeenth century by Rāja Bir Singh Deva of Urchā, who made himself infamous in the history of the time as the agent employed by Jahāngīr to waylay and kill his father's intimate friend and prime minister, Abul Fazl, when he passed through the Rāja's territories on his return to court from the Dekhan. The Rāja, when the plot succeeded too well, was hunted into the jungle by the imperial troops, but escaped capture, and on Jahāngīr's accession to the throne was richly rewarded by his employer. Jahāngīr's enmity to Abul Fazl was due to the fear that the latter might persuade his father to set aside his succession to the throne on account of his unruly temper and drunken habits.

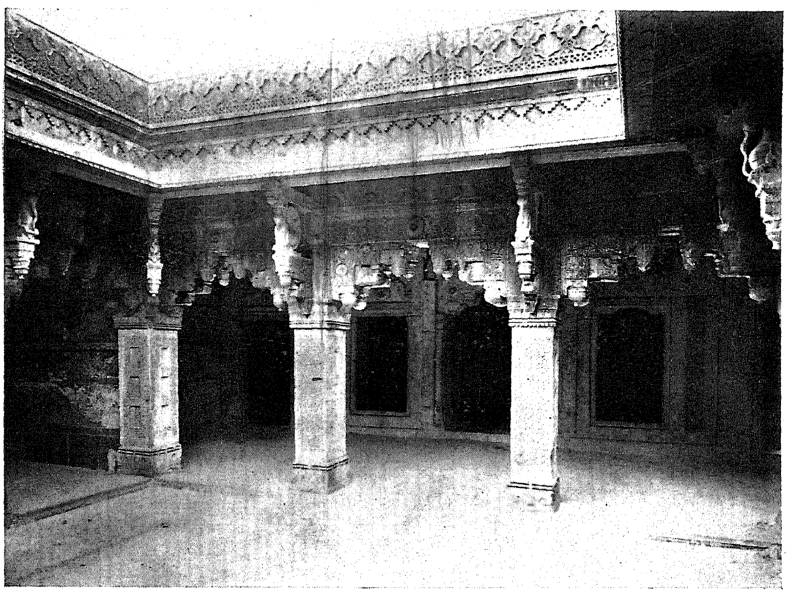
Built very solidly of granite and "well adorned with spacious tanks," the palace follows very closely Sukrachārya's directions for the planning of a royal residence. The Rāja's private apartments are in a square tower of four stories about 140 feet in height, "standing in the midst of the council buildings"—i.e., in the centre of the quadrangle formed by a great block of buildings, "of equal length in all direc-

Plate XXXVIa



DATIYĀ PALACE, WATER FRONT

Plate XXXVIb



JAHĀNGĪRI MAHALL, AGRA

tions," which contains the durbar-hall, offices, and apartments for the Rāja's retinue, etc. The exterior of the block measures over 300 feet on each side: it is like the Rāja's tower, four stories high; but the two lowest, serving as public reception-halls, form a vaulted basement about 40 feet high covering the whole area. The two highest stories of the tower therefore rise above the roofs of the surrounding buildings. The outer walls of this great fortress palace are shown in Pl. XXXVI, A, which gives the side overlooking the lake. It forms a perfect architectural unity, most finely conceived and much more stately in its massive grandeur than the palaces at Fatehpur Sikri and Agra, which were built in the preceding century by the Rajput master-masons employed by Akbar, or that built by his grandson, Shah Jahān, at Delhi. The fine courtyard of the Jahāngīri Mahall at Agra (Pl. XXXVI, B), probably built by Akbar, is a good example of the same style, modified in decorative detail in accordance with Muhammadan rules.

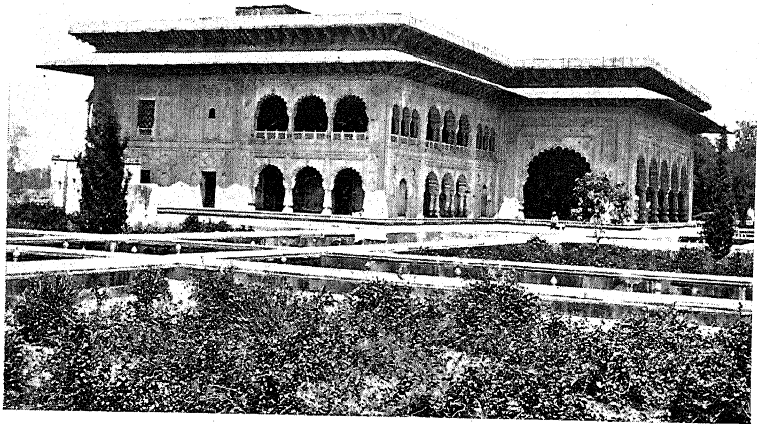
It will be noticed that the general scheme of the Indian palace, like that of the monastery, was based upon the traditional plan of the joint-family house described above. The Mogul palaces were planned on the same principle, combining the Indian dwelling-house with the garden pavilion, or pleasure-house, of which accounts are given in the oldest Buddhist literature. The nucleus of the great monastery at Nālanda was said to have been a garden-house where the Buddha himself had lived and taught for three months. Judging by the descriptions of Hiuen Tsang, it would seem that the monks of Nālanda, like those of Europe, were great gardeners. The administration of the Indian village community had its garden and

park committee as well as its tank or water committee, and Bābur's complaint that Indians knew nothing about pleasure-gardens, and had neither baths nor colleges, must be ascribed to his extreme ignorance of the country, though doubtless many of the finest gardens of Northern India were devastated in the long series of marauding invasions which occurred before his time.

Bābur's gardens at Agra and elsewhere were after the Persian model, divided crosswise with paved terraces and water-channels, a platform—" the mount of Felicity "—in the centre providing a place for recreation and entertainment. The plan was therefore the same as that of the Indo-Aryan village plan, repeated in the planning of the temple court. The pleasure-gardens of the Muhammadan dynasties had the religious character which runs through all Indian art, for one of them was always chosen as the owner's last resting-place. He usually took great pains in ordering the building which should eventually cover his tomb, and the garden itself was a symbol of the Elysian fields in which he hoped to wander after death.

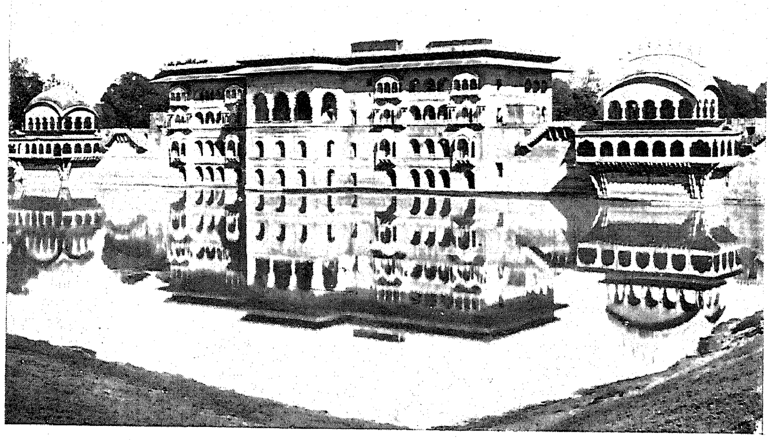
While many of the Hindu princes who became tributaries of the Mogul conquerors imitated the luxurious habits of the imperial court in the more spacious and sumptuous designing of their palaces and garden-mansions, they departed very little from the earlier traditions of the Indian master-builder. Nor were their pleasure-gardens ever used as private cemeteries. The most beautiful of the garden-palaces of India now existing is that which was built by the Rāja Surāj-Mall of Bharatpur at Dīg, about the middle of the eighteenth century, and ornamented with some of the loot from the palace at Agra which

PLATE XXXVIIA



PALACE OF SURĀJ MALL, DĪG, GARDEN FRONT

PLATE XXXVIIB



PALACE OF SURĀJ MALL, DĪG, WATER FRONT

he sacked. This fairy creation, as Fergusson justly styles it—for it seems like an Aladdin's palace in its dainty, dreamlike beauty—is a great contrast to the massive granite fortress of Datiyā. Still, it is easy to see that it belongs to the same school of building. In it the Hindu master-builder has combined exquisite taste with sound common sense, so admirably is it designed for coolness and comfort and for the satisfaction of the sense of beauty.

Of the double cornice (Pl. XXXVIII) which crowns the whole building with wonderful effect, the upper part provides an extension of the terraced roof, much used as a promenade or resting-place after sunset; the lower part, with its deep shadow, screens the outer walls from the heat and glare of the sun. The arched openings are spaced with a fine sense of rhythm and proportion: in construction they follow the Hindu bracket system, each arch being made of two slabs of red sandstone meeting at the crown.

Pl. XXXVIII, B, shows the front facing the garden, which is laid out in the formal Indian fashion with stone terraces, water-courses, and fountains. The combined scheme of palace and garden is co-ordinated with rare skill, and if the cunning of the Hindu gardener equalled that of the master-builder, this garden-palace in the days of Surāj-Mall must have been as enchanting as any of those in which that prince of gardeners, Bābur, held his jovial wine parties.

The Grand Canal of Venice can show nothing more festively harmonious than the water-front of the palace, facing the artificial lake, with its elegant balconies and arcaded verandahs and bathing pavilions. The stone roofs of the latter are borrowed from the thatched roofs of Bengal, which, with their pointed eaves, are scientifically adapted for throwing off the

torrential monsoon rain. In Asoka's time the builders of Magadha were in demand all over India, and their traditions were incorporated with those of Rajputana, where the local red sandstone provided a building material almost as easily worked as wood and much more durable. In this excellent material slabs and beams of almost any dimensions can be obtained without difficulty, and wherever this was the case Indian stone construction naturally retained a good deal of the technique of timber-work; for only the modern paper architect, working pedantically according to an archæological "style," would design an arch of numerous small pieces jointed together when it could be constructed more easily and effectually with one or two.

CHAPTER IX

MOSQUE AND TOMB

If the palaces of Muhammadan India, except for the extreme beauty of the decoration, can but rarely take the same rank in architecture as those of the Hindu princes of Rajputana, on the other hand its mosques and tombs are unsurpassed, and generally appeal more to the European critic than the earlier works of the Indian master-builder, to whom the entire credit of their creation is due; for though, like all great artists, he borrowed from his neighbours, especially from Persia, the Indian mosque and tomb are Indian and nothing else—as perfect in masonic craftsmanship as those of Persia are in the art of brick and glazed terra-cotta.

The striking contrast between the most remarkable of Indian mosques and tombs, especially those of the strict Sunni school, and the best known Hindu buildings has made many critics besides Fergusson ignore the derivative character of all Islamic architecture, and to attribute to Pathān and Mogul some subtle artistic sense which was lacking in the mind of the Indian master-builder before he became a slave of the Musalman conqueror or a convert to the creed of Islam.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the first Indo-Muhammadan dynasty was founded

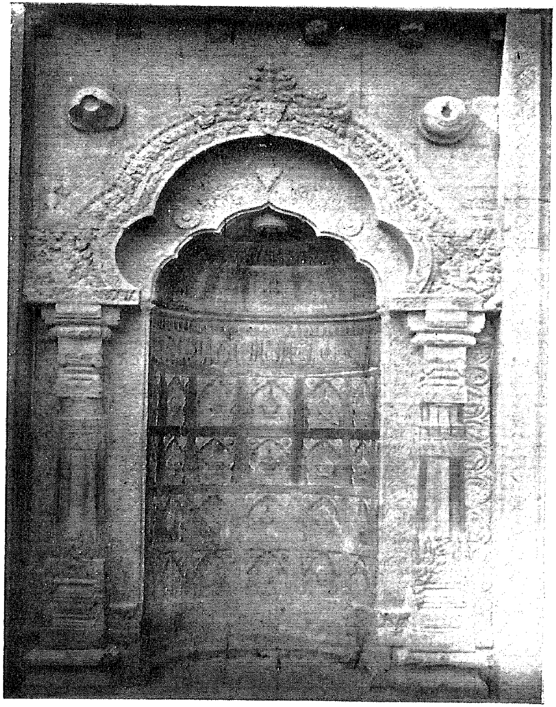
at Delhi, Musalman architecture had its established canons, but no great original masterpieces to hold up as examples for the Hindu builder. The Arabs had borrowed their builders from Rome, Byzantium, and Persia. The combination of the three schools, working together under conditions laid down by Islamic law, produced what is called Saracenic architecture, which, however, had not developed into an independent style before Islam began to draw upon the artistic resources of India in the same way as it had borrowed Indian science—mathematical, medicinal, and astronomical—to build up the schools for which Arab culture became famous in Europe.

Before the advent of the Prophet, Mahāyāna Buddhism, besides converting the Far East, had spread all over Western Asia; and the description given by Arab writers of the Kaaba, the most venerated shrine in Arabia, which was the first model of a Muhammadan mosque, strongly suggests a Buddhist temple or monastery filled with Mahāyānist images. It had been for all Arabs a place of pilgrimage from a very remote period—Muhammadan tradition says from the time of Abraham. It contained hundreds of images, among them those of Jesus Christ and the Holy Virgin. As M. Foucher has pointed out, Hariti, the Buddhist Madonna, is one which occurs in Mahāyānist iconography all over Asia; and it is not at all improbable that in the seventh century an ancient Buddhist shrine in Arabia contained images of Hariti and her partner, which were confused, as is so often the case, with Christian images.[1]

That which happened in later times in every province of India where Muhammadan rule was established

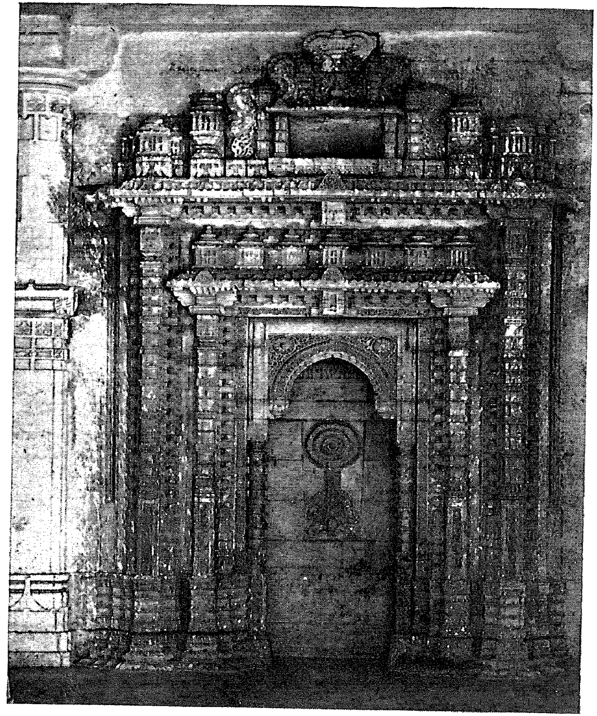
[1] See *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, by A. Foucher, translated by L. A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas, pp. 271–91.

Plate XXXVIIIa



MIHRABS IN ĀDĪNAH MASJID, GAUR

Plate XXXVIIIb



MIHRAB IN JĀMI' MASJID, JUNĀGADH

must have occurred earlier in Arabia and in Persia, when the war-lords of Islam had few building craftsmen except those they took prisoner or imported from other countries. The Buddhist images were torn from their niches and broken up or melted; the former temple or monastery, if not utterly destroyed, was used as a place of Muhammadan worship, and the empty niches (*mihrābs*) with their arches—lancetted, trefoiled, or sometimes of the earlier Hīnayāna trefoiled form—remained in the walls. The principal one in the western wall of the converted mosque pointed the direction to which the faithful must turn when saying their prayers, and was called the "Kiblah"[1]; so the arched niche was retained in every newly-built mosque and became a symbol of the faith. In private houses the numerous small niches which formerly had served as shrines for the saints, or household gods, of Mahāyāna Buddhism, were also retained: they were useful as cupboards or receptacles for the hookah, rose-water vessel, lamp, or other article of domestic use. The niche with its changed contents became as common a *motif* in the Muhammadan art of Arabia, Persia, and India, as it had been when it was the shrine of a Buddhist saint.

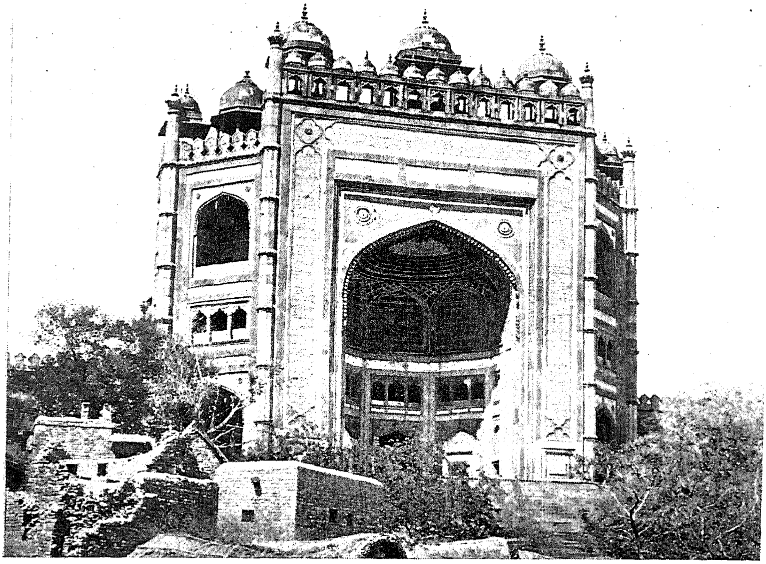
It followed almost inevitably that the pointed or horse-shoe arch was also used structurally for window and door openings instead of the semicircular Roman arch or the beam of the temple portico. The Persian builders quickly perceived the wonderful colour effects produced by their enamelled terra-cotta—an art which they had inherited from Babylon and Nineveh—when placed upon the curved surfaces of the niche, and the convenience of placing a doorway or window under the shelter of its semi-dome instead of building

[1] From Arabic Qabala, to be opposite.

a projecting porch or balcony for it. The law of the Kurān, which, like the Mosaic law, forbade the making of a graven image or the likeness of anything which is in heaven or earth, dictated the character of Muhammadan decorative art so long as the Sunna—the canonical law of Islam—was strictly observed. Texts from the Kurān, in the beautiful scripts of Arabia and Persia, were used with great effect as architectural decoration both carved and painted. But this rule was not held to be valid by the Shiāhs, the dissenting sect, who both in Persia and in India allowed themselves a free use of animals and human figures, so that in all Muhammadan countries there was the same difference between Sunni and Shiāh architecture as there was between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna architecture in India.

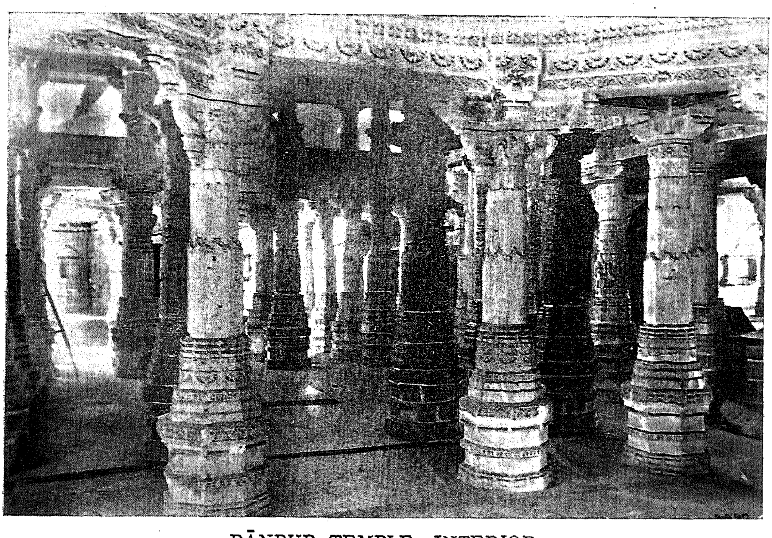
The stūpa-dome was another Buddhist contribution to Muhammadan architecture, in which a dome was likewise a symbol of a tomb or relic shrine. The domes of the earlier Khalifs were constructed after Roman or Byzantine models; but when the Muhammadan builders began to be recruited from the Gandharan districts on the north-west frontier of India, and Indian influence on the building craft of Islam gradually became stronger, both the form and system of domical construction in the West were discarded, and the types familiar to Buddhist builders were substituted for them. Thus the "bulbous" dome of Muhammadan Persia is undoubtedly derived from the stūpa shrine of the type sculptured in the stūpa-houses XIX and XXVI at Ajantā. The principle of its construction, by which the outward thrust is counteracted by a system of internal ties in the form of a wheel with eight spokes—the eight-petalled lotus—instead of by external abutments as in the Roman and Byzantine

PLATE XXXIXA



BULAND DARWĀZA, FATEHPUR-SIKRI

PLATE XXXIXB



RĀNPUR TEMPLE, INTERIOR

dome, is certainly Indian and Buddhist.[1] The Indian builders, when they attacked the same problem on a larger scale, using fine masonry instead of light impermanent materials, solved it in the traditional way by a system of pendentives beautifully fashioned in the form of a lotus flower which acted as an internal counterpoise. The dome of the Sultan Muhammad's tomb at Bijāpūr (Pl. XLIX, A), which until recent times was the second largest in the world, is the most famous example of this system. As Fergusson observed, it is better both as engineering and as pure æsthetic than the more cumbrous Roman system followed by European builders.

But it may be said that, even if Islam borrowed most of the constructive elements of its architecture from the building craft of India, artistic merit depends upon the way in which these elements were used, and in this essential Muhammadan art shows an originality and sense of fitness all its own. This is quite true, but Fergusson describes the early Muhammadan architecture of India as "invented by the Pathāns,"[2] who, he says, "had strong architectural instincts . . . and could hardly go wrong in any architectural project they might attempt."[3] The Pathān style, he writes, was "the stepping-stone by which the architecture of the West was introduced into India."[4]

He also gives the Moguls the credit of inventing the style called after the dynasty of that name. Other writers, while discarding the term "Pathān architecture," follow the lead of Fergusson in treating Indo-Muhammadan architecture as a foreign impor-

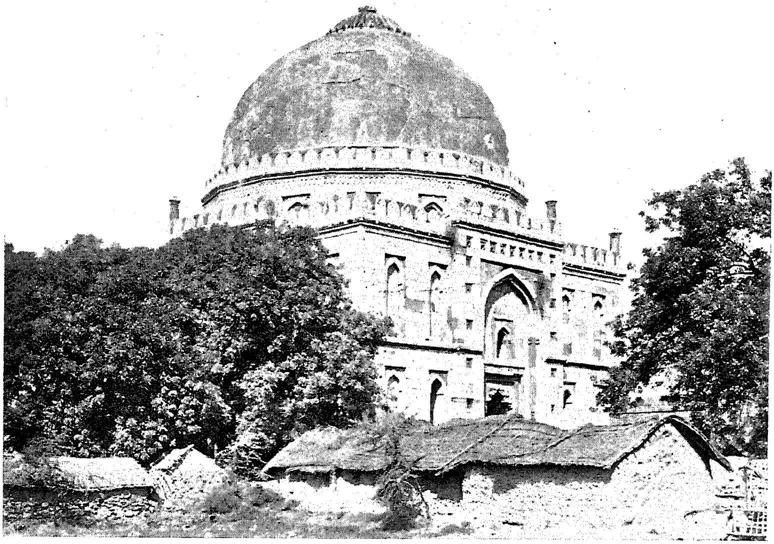
[1] See Appendix.
[2] *History of Indian Architecture.* 2nd edit., vol. ii, p. 288.
[3] Ibid., p. 197. [4] Ibid., p. 188.

tation, instead of being, as it really was, a new and brilliant development of the ancient Indo-Aryan building traditions under the pressure of foreign domination. The æsthetic ideas which found expression in Musalman architecture in India came from the mind of the Indian builder, and not from his Arab, Pathān, Turkish, or Mongol master.

For nearly a thousand years before the mission of the Prophet of Arabia began, India had exercised a profound influence upon the building craft of Asia, for wherever Indian Buddhist teachers found a footing, the Indian craftsman and artist followed to show the correct practice of the True Law in the ritual of the Buddhist Church. The great universities of India were schools of religious craftsmanship as well as of philosophy and science. In some of the oldest temples of Japan there exist at the present day fresco paintings of the school of Ajantā. We know from the memoirs of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hiān and Hiuen Tsang, how the work of the Indian image-maker was prized by the foreign pilgrims who flocked to Indian shrines, as much as the precious manuscripts in which the teaching of the Law was written. One cannot doubt that the Silpa-Sāstras, the canonical books of the Indian craftsman, were among the Buddhist texts which were carried to many distant countries by these earnest seekers after truth, and that their first care on reaching home after their long and perilous journeys would be to build a fitting shrine for the sacred relic or image, as nearly as possible after the Indian model.

The master-builder in all countries was a constant traveller, accustomed to long journeys in search of work, and the rapid spread of Buddhist propaganda, both from its original home in Magadha and from the

PLATE XLA



TOMB OF SIKANDAR LODI

PLATE XLB



SHĒR SHAH'S MOSQUE, DELHI

Gandhara country, in which it subsequently took root, must have created a great demand for the Indian builder in all the great cities of Asia.

Following upon this widespread and age-long diffusion of Indian building traditions throughout the Buddhist world came a demand of a similar character from another quarter which regarded Buddhist religious doctrine as anathema, but had no less need for the services of the Indian craftsman. In A.D. 712, or ninety years after the Hegira, Islam established direct control with India through the Arab conquest of Sind, which remained a province of the khalifate until it became an independent Musalman State. It is known that Indian pandits and physicians were employed at the Baghdad court; and it must be inferred that the demand for Indian builders was not less great, for long afterwards the war-lords of Islam, who butchered Brahman and Buddhist monks wholesale, made a point of sparing the lives of the skilled Indian craftsman. Mahmūd of Ghaznī, amazed at the magnificence of the Indian temples he looted, carried off thousands of their craftsmen to build for him at Ghaznī, and set up there a slave market of Indian women and craftsmen to supply the harems and workshops of Muhammadan Asia. This method of recruiting for their public works service was continued by many other Musalman monarchs.

It is necessary to take all these historical facts into consideration in order to follow the evolution of the schools of architecture classed by Fergusson as "Indo-Saracenic." The latter were in all cases directly derived from the local schools of Hindu or Buddhist building which preceded them. The earliest archæologically styled Pathān, which was established by the court builders of the first Sultan of Delhi, and

influenced the Muhammadan buildings of Northern India from the end of the twelfth to the middle of the sixteenth centuries, is only entitled to the name from the fact that some of the Sultans were Turks and others Pathāns. Mahmūd of Ghaznī may be said to have laid the foundations of the school by bringing Indian and Persian builders to Ghaznī, some by compulsion and others by persuasion, for several of the Rajput fighting clans joined the armies which he led to the loot of the cities of Hindustan. The characteristics of these so-called Pathān buildings are, as might be expected, a blend of Indian and Persian traditions adapted to the strict Sunni ritual, as dictated by the Ulamās of the Delhi court. The severity of their style must be attributed to the puritanical sentiment of the Sunni interpreters of Islamic law, and not to the racial temperament of the Pathān or Turkish fighting men or of their leaders. The external curve of the "Pathān" dome is the exact outline which the masonry dome of the Hindu temple mandapam of the period would assume if all its external sculpture were chipped off. As the masons were practical builders, they naturally adapted the structure of the dome to the new conditions. The dome is invariably crowned by the Buddhist and Hindu symbol, the Amalaka, or blue-lotus fruit, which probably passed the censorship of the Ulamā because its connection with the worship of Vishnu was not understood. The use of recessed arches was a suggestion from Persian Musalman buildings adapted, as before stated, from the niched shrines of Buddhist saints. The forms of the arches themselves, in all "Indo-Saracenic" styles, were invariably taken from the ritual of the Indian image-maker.

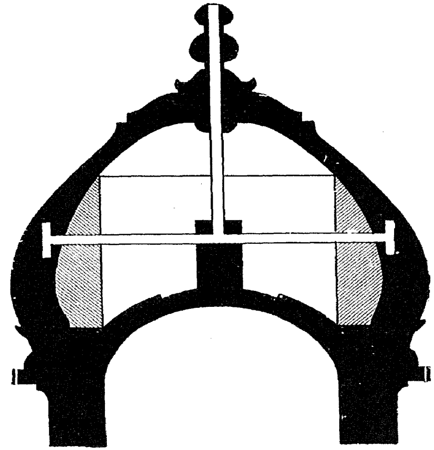
There is a finer feeling for proportion and archi-

Plate XLIa

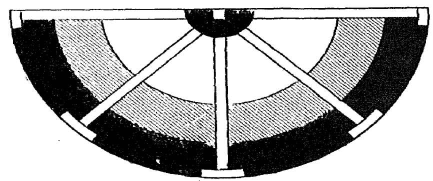


LOTUS DOME, AJANTĀ SCULPTURE

Plate XLIb



Vertical Section



Half-Sectional Plan

DIAGRAM SHOWING CONSTRUCTION OF LOTUS DOME

tectonic beauty in Indian mosques and tombs, generally built of brick or rubble-stone cased in fine masonry, than is often found in Persian Musalman buildings, which owe their peculiar charm more to their exquisite colouring and ornament. The grand portals of Indian mosques and tombs, such as the Buland Darwāza of Akbar's imperial mosque at Fatehpur Sikri, are more perfect in form and structure than the façades of Persian mosques, which the Indian builder was set to imitate. The Persian made his fronts for the display of the potter's lovely tile-mosaic, and often disregarded structural fitness in the effort to attain a splendid colour effect.

In this sculpturesque quality—the feeling for rhythm in profiles and masses—which is a special characteristic of Indian mosques and tombs, one can also detect the hand of the Hindu and Buddhist temple craftsman, who under Musalman rule found his occupation as an image-maker gone, but ample demand for his services as a master-builder.[1] It is a quality as conspicuous in the virile strength of the "Pathān" school as it is in the feminine, sometimes effeminate grace of Jahāngīr's and Shah Jahān's buildings.

The most perfect and latest examples of the former school are the mosque and tomb of Shēr Shah, the able and crafty Afghan chieftain who drove Bābur's son, Humāyūn, from his throne and ruled as master of Hindustan from 1540 to 1545. The mosque stands within the walls of the Purāna Kīlā, or Old Fort, at Delhi—which was Shēr Shah's capital—and the latter at Sahserām, in Bengal, where he had his family estate.

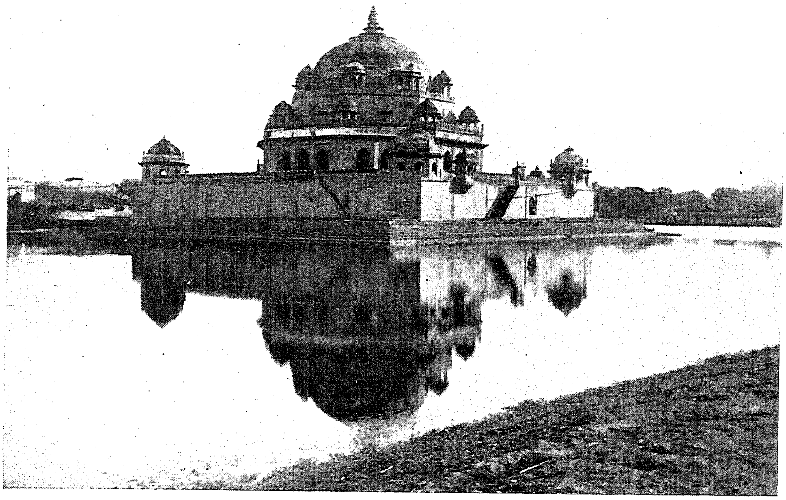
One façade of the mosque is shown in Pl. XL, B.

[1] Every Hindu master-builder was versed in the ritual and practice of image-making, though he usually specialised in one or other of the two arts.

It can be seen at once that the Indian builder has acquired a perfect mastery of the elements of design introduced by the ritual of Islam and put his own stamp upon them; for there is hardly any direct imitation of foreign models, but a skilful and harmonious adaptation of Hindu tradition to Muhammadan structural requirements. The dome, like all "Pathān" domes, is crowned by the Indian lotus-and-vase symbol. The crenellated parapet is the lotus-leaf pattern which is seen in the gateway of the Kailāsa temple at Ellora. Lotus flowers fill the spandrils of the arches, and the lotus-bud ornamentation of the soffits is also derived from the traditional symbolism of Hindu and Buddhist shrines. The bracketed cornice is another characteristic Indian feature. The arched openings are beautifully spaced and proportioned, not placed in Persian fashion at the back of a semi-cylindrical niche, but, probably with the idea of saving space within the līwān, slightly set back within the larger ornamental arches.

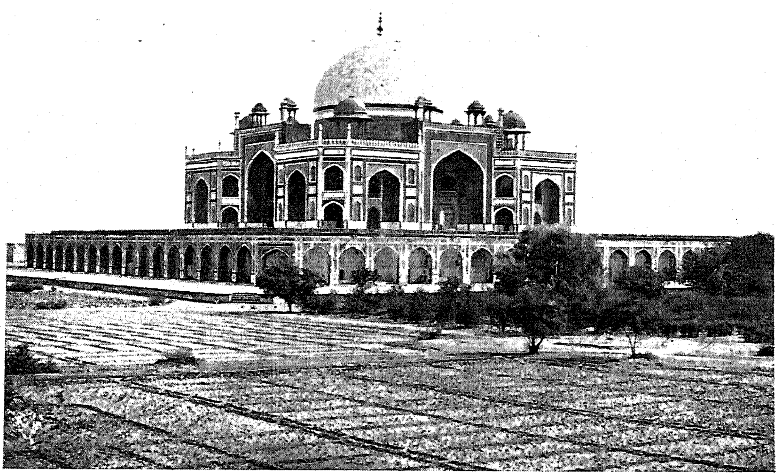
Shēr Shah's tomb, finely placed in the centre of an artificial lake (Pl. XLII, A) is one of the noblest of Indian monuments. The terrace in which it is built, reached by a bridge which is now broken, is 300 feet square, and the dome of the sanctuary is the second largest in India, being 71 feet in diameter, or 13 feet more than the dome of the Tāj Mahall. Like all Muhammadan tombs in India, it is very characteristic of the man for whom it was built. The Musalman monarch usually took the keenest interest in the designing of his own mausoleum, and his court builders were no less keen to follow his wishes in giving it a personal note. Shēr Shah was a strict Sunni, a stern disciplinarian, and an able but iron-handed ruler, who in his short reign of five years

PLATE XLIIA



TOMB OF SHĒR SHAH

PLATE XLIIB



TOMB OF HUMĀYŪN

restored peace and order in the provinces which had been reduced to a state of anarchy by the devastations of Timūr, and by the bitter struggle for mastery between Mogul, Afghan, and Rajput chieftains which followed the death of Bābur. He protected the Hindu *ryots* from the exactions of Musalman Zamindars, so that his State treasury might be replenished; and as his own countrymen, to whom he gave largess with a bountiful hand, were not builders, he set Hindu craftsmen to work in carrying out his building projects in conformity with Sunni prescriptions. Just as the Indian mosque is always Indian, so is the tomb of the great Pathān: it is the fifteenth-century development of the Indo-Aryan hero's tomb, the Buddhist stūpa. We have already seen how in the seventh century A.D., at Ajantā, the original idea of the stūpa as it was at Sānchī and Bharhut is altered. The dome, instead of being a solid mass enclosing a small relic chamber, has become a structural dome [1] of lotus-leaf form serving as the roof of an image shrine. The Lord Buddha has arisen from the dead and his tomb has become his throne-chamber.

We must infer that in the seventh century A.D. the living Indian king, enthroned in state as the Buddha's representative on earth, would have been seated under such a domed canopy. So when the Musalman Sultans and nobles of Delhi five centuries later employed

[1] Though no structural dome of this kind now exists either at Ajantā or elsewhere in India, the sculptured representations of them are decisive proof that they existed; and in the great Mahāyāna monasteries described by Hiuen Tsang they were doubtless very much larger than the largest sculptured representations of them. The dome of the canopy shown in Pl. XLIV, A, could not have been built in a solid mass; and it could hardly have been constructed otherwise than by the method employed by modern Persian builders shown in Pl. XLI, B, which, with its wooden internal ties in the form of a wheel, is undoubtedly derived from the Indian Buddhist tradition. See Appendix.

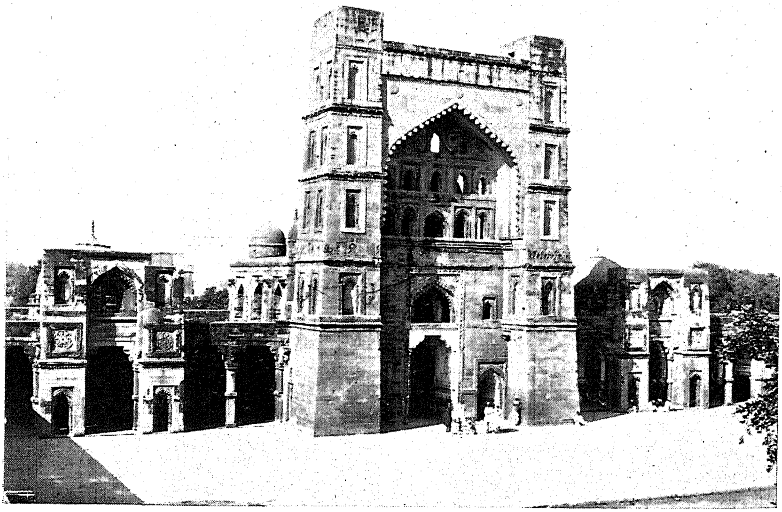
Indian craftsmen to build their tombs in their pleasure-gardens, the latter had a traditional type of structure easily adapted to it—the pavilion on the central terrace of a royal garden where the king sat. The foreign Musalman monarchs in India nearly always had Indian wives and adopted Indian customs, so the domed pavilions which cover the earliest Muhammadan tombs in India were probably usual in the Hindu royal gardens of the period, and were obviously derived from the Buddhist canopied shrine as sculptured at Ajantā.[1] The consecration of the pavilion as a tomb, on the death of the owner of the garden, made it a shrine which often attracted large crowds of pilgrims. The garden tomb became for the Indian Musalman, and often for the Hindu pilgrims, what the Buddhist reliquary or cenotaph had been. This made it necessary to extend the original nucleus of the pavilion, or arcaded chamber—which was either square or octagonal in plan—by building arcaded or pillared corridors round it, analogous to the covered procession paths of Buddhist and Hindu shrines.

Shēr Shah planned on a magnificent scale the tomb in which he and his comrades in arms should rest, evidently anticipating that it would be a resort of many pious Musalmans; not without reason, for he was prodigal in the benefactions he bestowed on his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists as their share of the rich kingdom he had won by his sword. In his reign, his biographer records, "no Afghan, whether in Hind or in Roh, was in want, but all became men of substance."

The structural scheme of the tomb, with its central octagonal chamber surrounded by arcaded corridors,

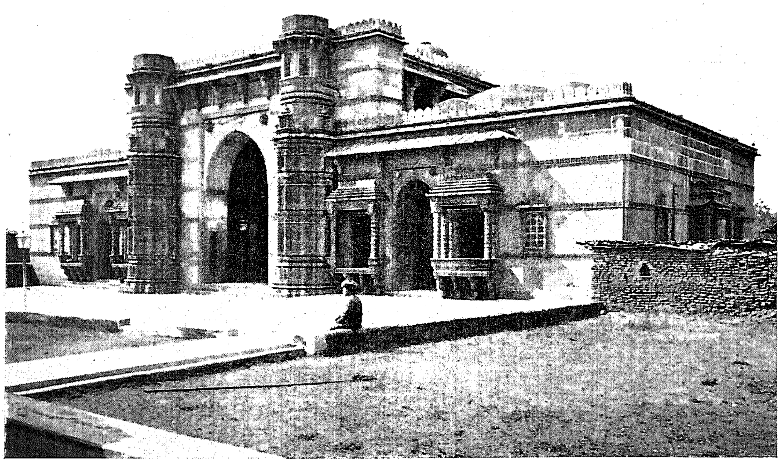
[1] Ultimately from the more primitive domed canopy shown at Sānchī (Pl. XXII, B).

PLATE XLIIIA



ATĀLA MASJID, JAUNPUR

PLATE XLIIIB



RĀNĪ RUPAWANTI'S MASJID, AHMADĀBĀD

is very similar to that of the many-spired Bengali temples. Pl. XLII, A, shows it in its present condition after the recent restoration by Sir John Marshall, who rightly replaced the feeble and meaningless kiosk placed on the summit by previous restorers by the original Hindu symbol which crowns other Afghan tombs in the neighbourhood.

Neither in this nor in any other of the great Indo-Muhammadan monuments is the hand or mind of the foreign builder apparent. It is neither "Pathān" nor "Indo-Persian." Though Shēr Shah was an Afghan by race, his family had been settled in Bengal for generations, a fact which gave him a great advantage over his rival, Humāyūn, for the Moguls at that time were looked upon as interlopers, disliked both by Hindus and by Musalmans born in India. This stately pile commemorating the deeds of the doughty Afghan chief is an early example of the great school of Indian masonic craftsmanship to which the fortress palace of Datiyā belongs. The only part which the Pathāns took in the new creation was that they forced the Indian builder to break loose from the rigid ritual of the Brahman and Buddhist temple and gave him a wider scope for his inventive faculties.

CHAPTER X

MUHAMMADAN ARCHITECTURE AT MANDU, JAUNPUR, AHMADĀBĀD, AND GAUR

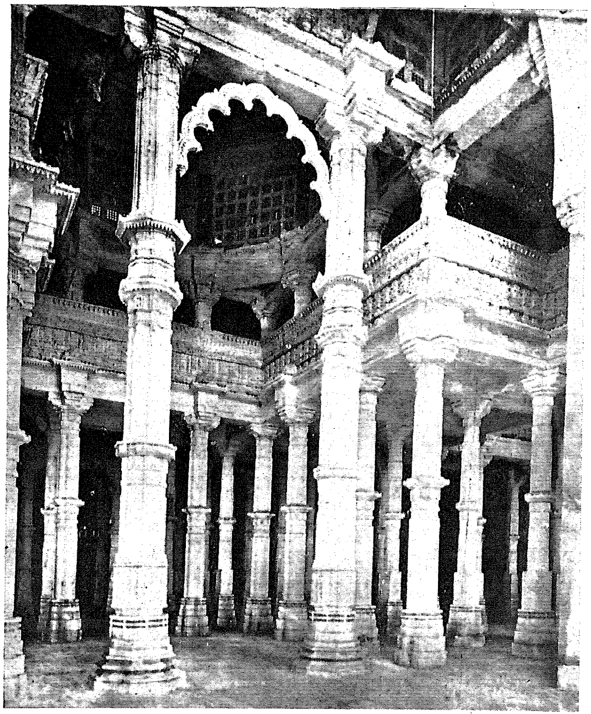
MANY other remarkable monuments of the Afghan rule in India are found at Mandu, the former capital of the Sultanate of Mālwā founded by Dīlāwar Shah in the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Timūr's bloody raid into India gave him an opportunity of renouncing his allegiance to the Sultans of Delhi.

Mandu, built upon a grand plateau overlooking the valley of the Narbadā river, was in its time one of the most formidable of the hill fortresses of India. It played a conspicuous part in the history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and its imposing palaces, mosques, and tombs, reservoirs and dharma-sālas, or rest-houses for travellers, designed with the stern simplicity of the Sunni sect to which most of the Afghan Sultans belonged, still testify to the architectural magnificence of an Indian royal city in those days.[1]

The fine mosques of Jaunpur represent another local development of the same school, most likely based upon the pre-Muhammadan craft traditions of Benares, which had been a great building centre from the dawn of Indian history right down to modern times. Jaunpur was founded by the Delhi Sultan

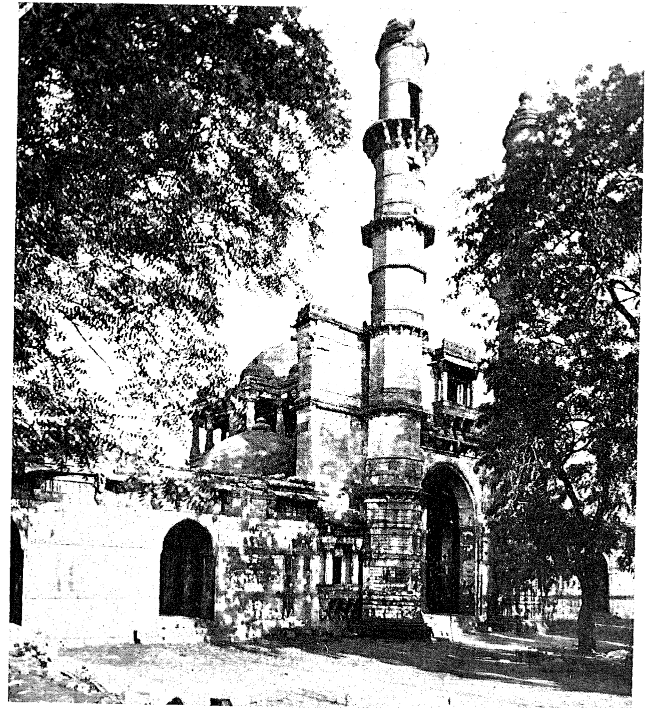
[1] A summary of the romantic history of Mandu is given in the *History of Aryan Rule in India*, by the Author (Harrap), pp. 347–55.

PLATE XLIVA



JĀMI' MASJID, AHMADĀBĀD, INTERIOR

PLATE XLIVB



JĀMI' MASJID, CHAMPANĪR

Fīrūz Shah in the fourteenth century, and under the Sharkī dynasty in the fifteenth, when it formed an independent Musalman State, it became famous as a seat of Islamic learning especially remarkable for its tolerant attitude towards Hindusim.

The Muhammadans began at Jaunpur, as they did at Delhi and elsewhere, by using the materials provided by the Hindu temples they destroyed. The buildings erected afterwards under the enlightened Sharkī Sultans are eloquent of the spirit of the Musalman colleges of Jaunpur, for they show an interesting and original synthesis of Hindu and Muhammadan structural ideas which had its parallel in the attempt made by Husain Shah, the Sultan of Gaur, to found a religious cult called Sātya-Pir, with the object of uniting Musalman and Hindu in divine worship.[1] The imposing propylons of the mosques, in which arch and bracket are combined most skilfully, are adaptations of the Hindu temple gopurams. From a technical point of view, it is interesting in these early Indo-Muhammadan buildings to observe the various experiments made by the masons in arch-construction. There is no sign that they were working under expert foreign guidance; evidently every mason had his own ideas on the subject, and was allowed to work in his own way provided that he conformed to the building ritual of Islam dictated by the mullahs or by the officers of the court under whose orders the builders were placed.

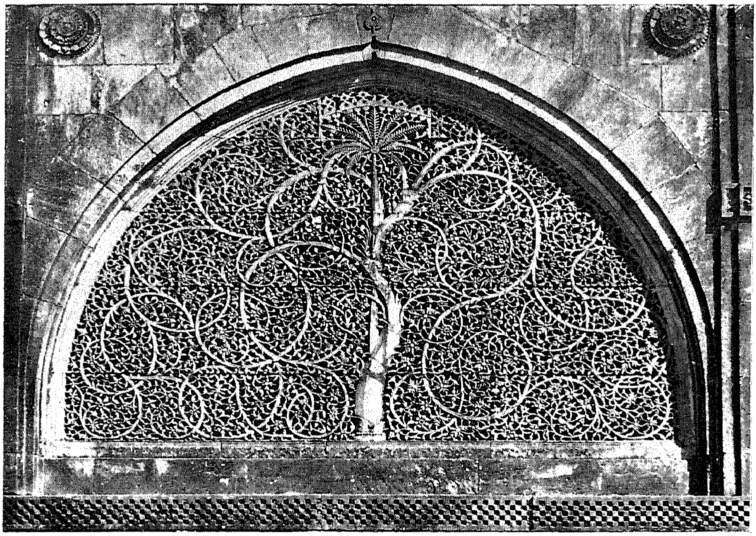
Contemporary with the Jaunpur school was the Muhammadan school of Gujerat, established under a dynasty which threw off allegiance to the Delhi Sultanate at the end of the fourteenth century. The founder of it, Muzaffar Shah, was the son of a

[1] Satya-Nārāyana was the name under which Vishnu was worshipped in Bengal. Pir was the Arabic synonym for the Supreme Spirit.

Rajput chieftain who, when taken prisoner by the Musalmans, renounced Hinduism to save his life. His son and successor, Ahmad Shah I, built Ahmadābād in the first half of the fifteenth century. Outside the chief towns the province remained Hindu, and the Muhammadan architecture of Gujerat is in every detail, even more distinctly than in other places, derived from the local building traditions. Ahmadābād was planned after the ancient Indo-Aryan tradition of a royal capital. Ahmad Shah was a contemporary of the famous Kumbhā, the Rānā of Chitor, whose royal chapel has been described above[1]; and Ahmad's royal mosque, both as regards structure and ornamentation, was laid out on nearly the same lines as a great Jain temple which was being built at Rānpur in Kumbhā's territory about the same time. This purely Indian school of building, which originated some of the most beautiful mosques and tombs of Islam, attained to full development about the end of the fifteenth century, when Mahmūd Begarah captured the hill fortress of Champanīr, and built there a splendid mosque, finished in 1508 (Pl. XLIV, B). From the middle of the same century Gujerat became one of the most powerful Musalman States in Northern India: there was great building activity in its chief towns, Ahmadābād, Champanīr, Cambay, Baroch, Dholkā, and Mahmūdābād, until near the end of the sixteenth century, when Gujerat became a province of Akbar's empire.

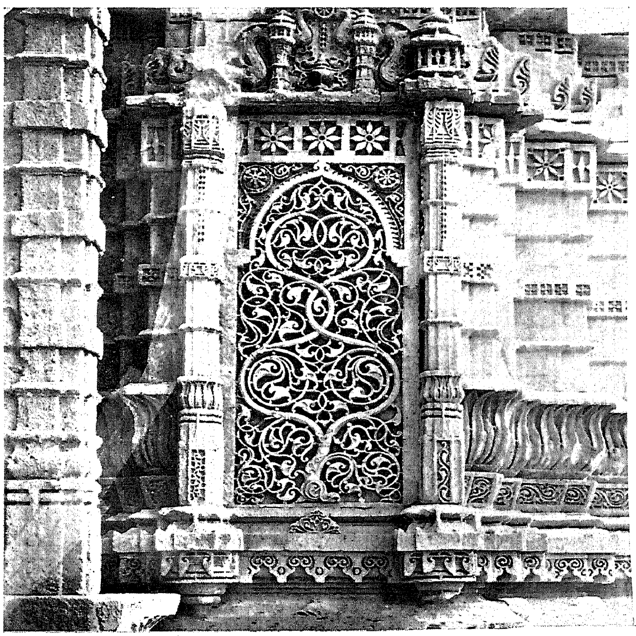
These Gujerati buildings are distinguished by the varied design of their minarets, which were adaptations of the contemporary Hindu towers of victory, and by the exquisite perforated stone tracery of their windows (Pl. XLV), hardly less beautiful than the stained glass

[1] P. 70



AHMADĀBĀD, PERFORATED STONE WINDOW

PLATE XLVB



CHAMPANĪR, PERFORATED STONE WINDOW

of the Western Gothic school, with which Indo-Muhammadan architecture has many affinities, and fulfilling a similar æsthetic idea with the modifications necessitated by the requirements of a tropical climate. The origin of these stone trellises can be traced back through the pierced stone windows of Hindu temples to the wooden screens which filled the windows of Buddhist stūpa-houses.

Gujerat was also famous for its magnificent step-wells and irrigation works, serving public orchards and ordinary agricultural purposes, which both, under Hindu and Muhammadan rule, were constructed as a part of the religious duty of the State. The finest of these step-wells now in use is at Asārwā, near Ahmadābād (Pl. XLVI, A). It was built, according to the Sanskrit inscription in one of its pillared galleries, in the first year of the sixteenth century by a Hindu lady, Bāī Srī Harīra, whose husband was apparently connected with Mahmūd Shah's court.[1] The underground chambers surrounding step-wells were designed to provide a cool retreat in the torrid heat of the Indian summer.

On the north-eastern side of India, Gaur was for several centuries one of the most important building centres of Hindustan. In the sixteenth century it was reckoned by the Portuguese as one of the greatest of Indian cities, its population being estimated at over a million. Its early history as the capital of the Hindu kingdom of Gaur, when it was known under the name of Lakhnauti, goes back to many centuries before Christ. Situated as it was on the banks of the Ganges with easy access to the sea, it had a maritime trade which no doubt extended to the whole of the

[1] For description of the well and illustrations see *Indian Architecture*, by the Author (Murray, 1913), pp. 143–4.

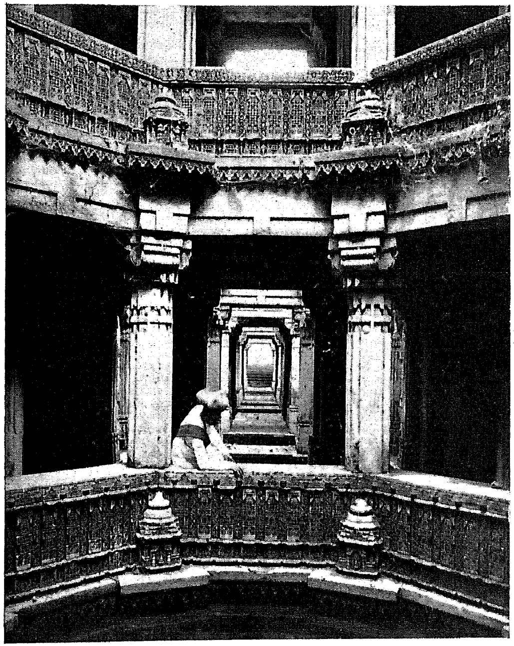
Indian coast-line, and it was perhaps from Gaur as a centre that the characteristic forms of Bengali architecture spread to other parts of India.

We have seen already in early Buddhist architecture that the craftsmanship of the village served the purposes of the monastery and temple, the forms consecrated by use in the religious ritual of Vedic times being perpetuated in brick and stone when Aryan religion was organised as a brotherhood, based upon the village community, and the garden cities of India—with their public orchards, bathing places, and assembly-halls—made the village the foundation of civic life and the unit of their planning.

We might therefore expect it to be the case in Bengal, the home country of Buddhism, that the characteristics of cottage-building would be repeated in the temple, and that the mosque, as in other parts of India, would be an adaptation of the temple. This is in fact what we find there. The excellent thatched cottages of Bengal have curved roofs with pointed eaves, built upon an elastic bambu framework which gives them rigidity and acts most effectively in throwing off the rain. The "horse-shoe" arch, the "bulbous" dome, and the curvilinear sikhara must have been originally built on the same principle, which is as effective in its practical purpose whether the roof be built of thatch or brick and plaster or of slabs of stone.

The Pathāns, when they made Lakhnauti a Muhammadan capital, found therefore a local school of building using curvilinear roofs; and as brick rather than stone is the natural building material of the country, they had less difficulty in adapting the temple to Muhammadan symbolism, for the Bengali builders were accustomed to use the arch both for structural and

PLATE XLVIA



STEP WELL, NEAR AHMADĀBĀD

PLATE XLVIB



CHOTA SONĀ MASJID, GAUR

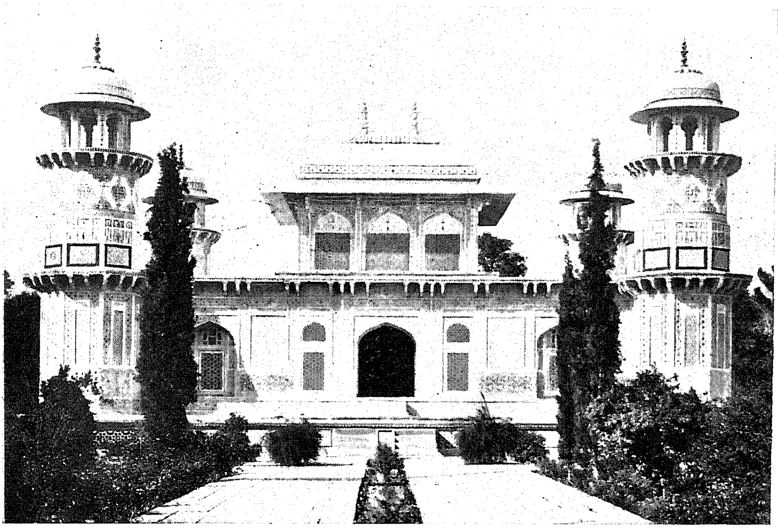
decorative purposes. The Pathān mosques and tombs of Gaur, Panduah, and Māldā on this account are an even closer imitation of Hindu and Buddhist buildings than they were in the neighbourhood of Delhi, where stone of large dimensions was procurable, and consequently the arch was not used by Hindu masons to serve a structural purpose. The terra-cotta and fine moulded brick decoration used both in the mosque and temple in Bengal was certainly not imported by the Muhammadans: the cognate art of enamelled tiles and bricks so much used in Muhammadan buildings in India was probably a local one in Gaur. It is sometimes found in early Buddhist buildings in India—e.g. Kanishka's stūpa at Peshawar—and may have been one of the arts which the early Aryans introduced into the Ganges valley from Mesopotamia, together with the priceless economic products of Babylonia with which they enriched the agriculture of India. Persian culture was certainly a powerful influence on the court life of Muhammadan India, but was not, as is generally assumed, the great creative impulse in Indian art. During the whole period of Muhammadan rule in India that came from within: the dilettanti monarchs of Turkish, Pathān, and Mongol extraction dictated the fashions of their courts, and the Indian craftsmen did their best to please their foreign rulers, whether they were uncompromisingly Sunni or tolerantly Shiah in their religious professions. But it was the innate versatility of the Indian builders, past masters in their craft and heirs to a tradition going back to the building of Nineveh and Babylon, which made Muhammadan buildings in India the most beautiful of their kind in the world.

The most important Muhammadan buildings now remaining at Gaur, among the ruins covering an

area about ten miles in length and between two and three miles in breadth, date from the last half of the fourteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth. Some of them have pillars of polished basalt, instead of the usual brick piers, and the brickwork is faced with fine masonry, instead of tiles, exquisitely decorated in low relief. When the Indian mason was thus employed in the service of Islam he began experimenting with arch-construction in the same way as at Jaunpur, but the forms of the arches he used were those he had been accustomed to use in Buddhist and Hindu temples.

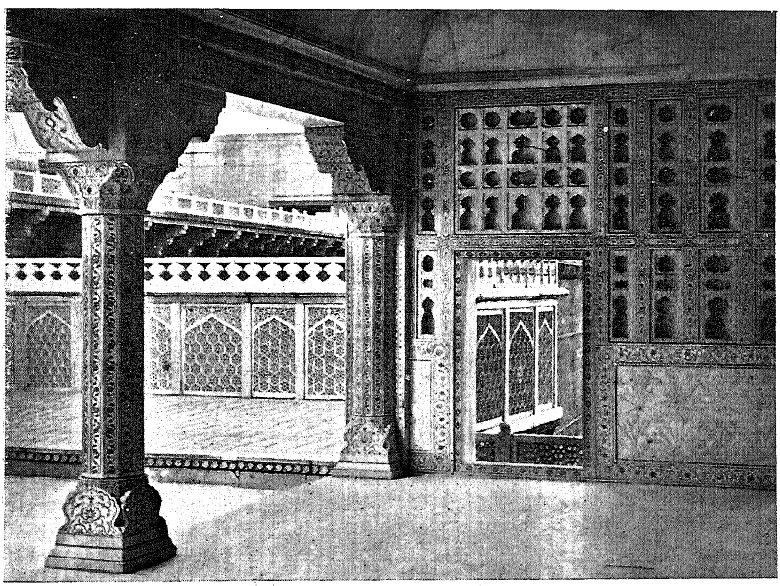
Gaur was absorbed into the empire of the Great Moguls in 1576, and soon became subject to the fate of the former Hindu city and many others like it. Its splendid deserted buildings were used as brickfields and quarries, from which ready-made materials could be transported for the building of other cities. It thus happens, says Fergusson, that Murshidābād, Māldā, Rangpur, and Rājmahal have been built almost entirely with its materials, whilst Hughly and even Calcutta are rich in the spoils of the old capital of Bengal.

Plate XLVIIa



ITIMĀD-UD-DAULA'S TOMB, AGRA

Plate XLVIIb



SAMMAN BURJ, AGRA

CHAPTER XI

THE BIJĀPŪR AND MOGUL SCHOOLS—MODERN INDIAN BUILDING

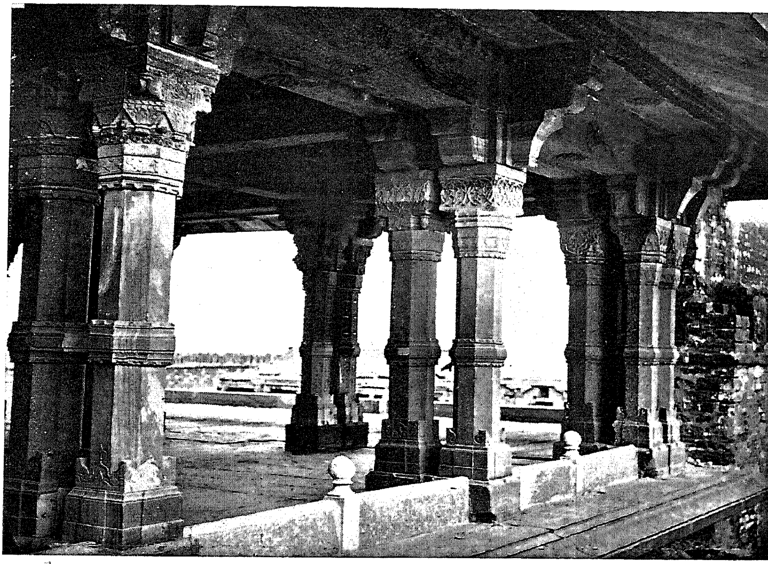
All the Muhammadan building schools described above belonged to Hindustan, the ancient Aryāvarta. South of the Vindhya mountains, in the Dekhan and farther south, there were several other Muhammadan schools, marked by a strong individuality, which, like those of the north, were derived from the pre-existing Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Kulbarga, Bidar, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar, and Aurangabad—the capitals of different Muhammadan kingdoms of the Dekhan from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries—were laid out by the Indian craftsmen in the service of Muhammadan Sultans as magnificently as the ancient cities of India which the armies of Islam destroyed or used as Gaur was used. But the most distinguished of the southern schools under Musalman rule was that of Bijāpūr, the capital of the State of the same name which became independent in 1490, when Yusuf 'Adil Shah, its Turkish governor, threw off allegiance to the Bāhmani Sultans and founded a dynasty which lasted until the latter part of the seventeenth century. But the great building projects of the Bijāpūr Sultans only began with the reign of 'Ali 'Adil Shah I in the middle of the sixteenth century, after the victory of the united Musalman forces of the Dekhan over Rām Rāj, the Rājā of Vijayanagar, and head of the Hindu

coalition which for two centuries had barred the passage of the arms of Islam to the farther south.

During this period Vijayanagar had been in Southern India what Gaur was in the north, a great trading centre and one of the most populous cities of the East, crowded with artisans of every kind, and laid out sumptuously with artificial lakes, parks, gardens, palm-groves, and orchards. Paez, a Portuguese traveller in the early sixteenth century, described it as "the best provided city in the world: stocked with provisions of every kind, with broad and beautiful streets full of fine houses. The palace of the Rājā enclosed a space greater than all the castle of Lisbon." The relations between Vijayanagar and its Musalman neighbour had by no means been always hostile. The Rājās had sometimes assisted the Bijāpūr Sultans in their quarrels with other Musalman States, and had enlisted a Muhammadan bodyguard in their service, allowing its officers to swear fealty on the Kurān, and building for them a mosque in the quarter of the city set apart for them. After the fatal battle of Talikota, in which Rām Rāj was killed, Vijayanagar was sacked by the Musalmans, and Bijāpūr, with the help of the captive Hindu craftsmen, became the chief building centre of the Dekhan.

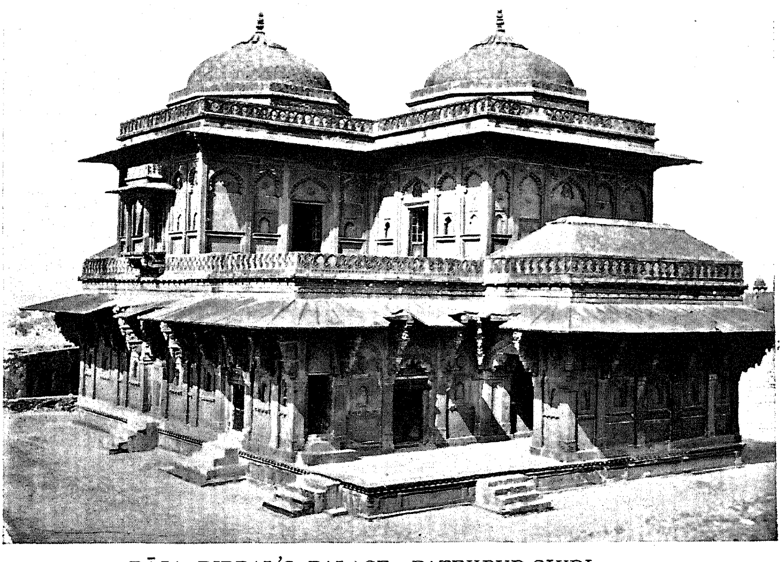
The architecture of Bijāpūr was characterised by the fact that the Sultans who were the builders of the city were nearly all of the Shiah sect, and as tolerant towards Hinduism as the Vijayanagar Rājās had been towards Islam, admitting Brahmans into their service and using Mahratti instead of Persian as the official language for revenue administration. Ibrāhīm II (1580—1606), in whose reign most of the finest buildings of Bijāpūr were begun, was even suspected of taking part in Hindu religious ceremonies.

PLATE XLVIIIA



PANCH MAHALL, FATEHPUR-SIKRI

PLATE XLVIIIB



RĀJA BIRBAL'S PALACE, FATEHPUR-SIKRI

The fact that the 'Adil Shāhi dynasty was Turkish may account for the special efforts made by the Bijāpūr builders in dome-construction. Constantinople was famous throughout the Muhammadan world for the grandeur of its domes, and there was a constant rivalry between Musalman potentates to make their monuments the biggest things on earth, either as regards size or in the costliness of materials and decoration. The Indian craftsmen, put upon their mettle by their Musalman employers, achieved in the tomb of Muhammad 'Adil Shah (1636—1660) a dome approximately as large as that of the Pantheon at Rome,[1] built entirely on Indian constructive principles—scientifically the most perfect in the world, and, as Fergusson stated, artistically the most beautiful form of roof yet invented. The principle of its construction was at that time unknown in Europe, but it is found in domes of an earlier date at Bijāpūr and other parts of India. It is therefore extremely unlikely that Ottoman builders had anything to do with the evolution of Bijāpūr architecture.

The earliest of the great buildings at Bijāpūr is the royal mosque of 'Ali 'Adil Shah, built in the last half of the sixteenth century to celebrate the fall of Vijayanagar. It closely resembles the ruined building now known as the "Elephant Stables" in the old Hindu city, which was probably built as a mosque for the Muhammadan bodyguard of the Vijayanagar Rājās. 'Ali 'Adil Shah's successor, Ibrāhīm II, built the magnificent mausoleum (Pl. L, B) and mosque called after his name as memorials for his favourite daughter and for his wife, Tāj Sultana, which was

[1] The area of floor space covered by the dome exceeds that of the Pantheon by about 2,500 square feet, but the dome itself is slightly smaller.

doubtless among the "famous buildings of the world" discussed by Shah Jahān and his master-builders when the design of the Tāj Mahall at Agra was under consideration. The Bijāpūr monument was built under similar circumstances a few years before Shah Jahān commenced the wonderful memorial to his beloved wife.

THE MOGUL SCHOOL

It may be convenient for historical purposes to classify all Muhammadan buildings erected by the Indian master-builders under the Mogul dynasty, from its foundation by Bābur in 1526 down to the eighteenth century, as "Mogul," though they are by no means Mogul, or Mongolian, in design and are very varied in character. In order to understand the history of the Mogul or of any Indo-Muhammadan school of building, one must first consider the effect of Islam's war-like propaganda upon the building traditions of India. Before the Muhammadan conquest the Indian hereditary builders, whose traditions of technique and design went back in an unbroken line to some of the most ancient cities of the world, had for many centuries borrowed no structural ideas from outside India, but kept strictly to the craft ritual laid down in their own sacred writings. Though it is written in the Silpa-Sāstrās that the master-builder should be "conversant with all the sciences," it is probable that, as in the present day, every branch of the Indian building craft had become highly specialised, common traditions co-ordinating the different branches and preserving unity of structure and design.

Many centuries of practice within these lines had developed extraordinary technical skill without exhausting the immense fertility of invention possessed by the

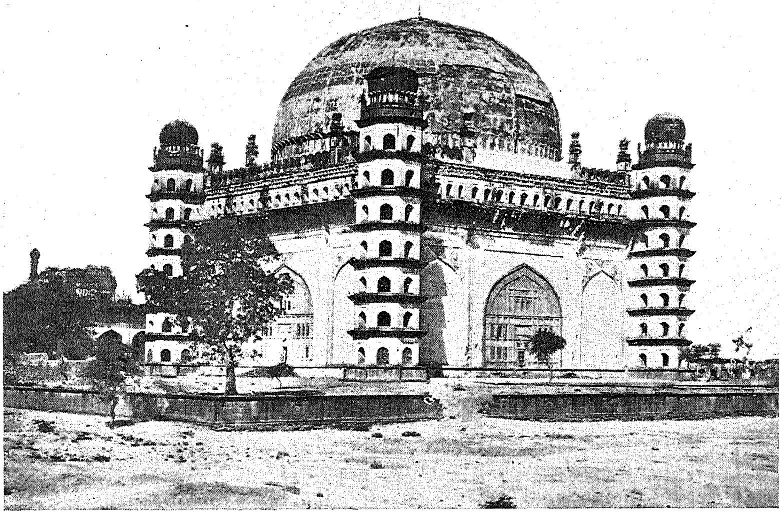
Indian craftsman, when the Muhammadan conquest made a revolutionary change in his hereditary craft practice. Thousands of craftsmen, each expert in his own special branch, were forced into the service of Islam in different parts of Asia and Europe, and set to work indiscriminately at the bidding of their masters. The expert builder of Hindu vimānas might not build a temple spire, but he could design or build the dome of a mosque or tomb equally well. The image-maker might not make images, but he could construct the mihrāb of a mosque or carve texts from the Kurān. The painter might not paint pictures, but he could ornament enamelled tiles, decorate walls without using figures or animals, and draw designs for the mullahs when they were planning a mosque or tomb.

Thousands of Indian craftsmen thus settled down to a new life and new work in their forced exile, took Muhammadan names, and became Persians, Arabs, Turks, Spaniards, or Egyptians. A few centuries afterwards the establishment of a Muhammadan empire in India increased the demand for Musalman craftsmen, and offered many inducements for the descendants of these Indian captives to seek employment in the opulent cities some of which their ancestors had helped to build. The new ideas brought into India by these "foreigners" were only the old ones in a new shape, the craft ritual of India adapted to different technical conditions and to a new environment. Religious animosities by this time had softened down. The Hindu and Musalman craftsmen worked amicably together without compulsion, and used their inventive faculties to add to the splendour of Indian cities and gratify the taste of their Mogul rulers, who planned their capitals after the traditions of Indo-Aryan royalty, and were themselves generally more than half Indian by birth.

The Mogul building tradition was therefore wholly Indian, only a new departure analogous to that of the Renaissance in Europe. The Hindu builder threw his old structural formulas into the melting-pot, and reshaped them himself, with astonishing constructive skill, in new forms of such fantasy and variety that the European critic, accustomed to the archæological rules of the Renaissance and generally profoundly ignorant of Indian history, finds it difficult to follow them: for while the Renaissance tied down the European master-builder to narrower constructive limits than the Gothic, the changes in craft traditions made by the Muhammadan conquest of India gave the Indian master-builder a new and much wider field for his invention and skill. Especially in the Mogul period the dilettante began to exercise considerable influence upon the design of buildings, but not to the same extent as in Renaissance architecture in Europe. At the beginning of Renaissance architecture the amateur archæologist was admitted into the fraternity of masons, and after a time had so much influence upon building traditions that craftsmanship and design were divorced from each other, with disastrous results, both economic and artistic. The fragments of Greek and Roman building were drawn, measured minutely, written about in countless volumes, and made the models of a correct taste which every builder was bound to accept. The literary amateur who knew his books became the master-builder, and the master-builder, whose creative mind had led the van of civilisation, became a more or less illiterate artisan, whose vocation it was to shape a set of paper patterns to a practical form and supply the technical knowledge which the architect lacked.

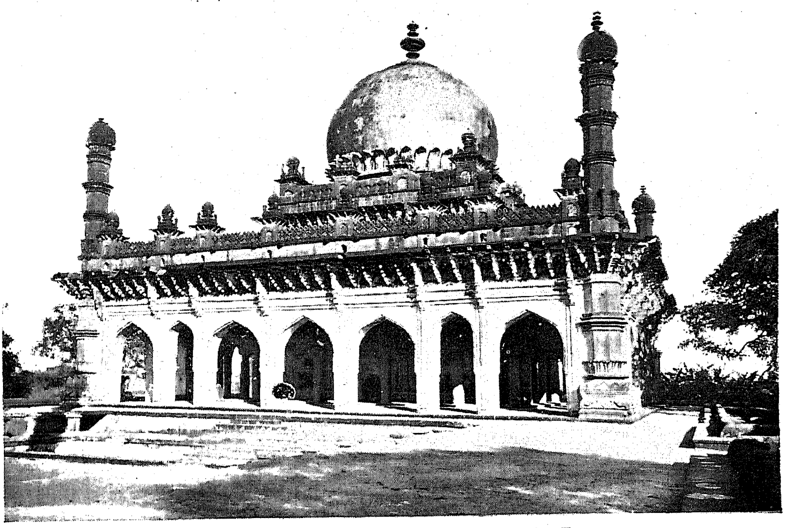
There was nothing similar to this process of degenera-

PLATE XLIXA



SULTAN MUHAMMAD'S TOMB, BIJĀPŪR

PLATE XLIXB



SULTAN IBRĀHĪM'S TOMB, BIJĀPŪR

tion with the Renaissance of Indian architecture in the Mogul period. The first five of the Great Moguls were, like the monarchs and noblemen who imposed their ideas upon Renaissance building in Europe, men of wide culture keenly interested in architectural design. But while each of them gave a personal note to his palace, mosque, or tomb, there was no fixed formula, no "Mogul style"—or paper patterns to which the Indian master-builders were tied. Humāyūn's tastes were Persian; his builders designed him a Persianised version of the orthodox Indian Musalman's tomb. Akbar, in the beginning of his reign, ordered his imperial mosque at Fatehpur-Sikri to be built as a "duplicate of the Holy Place" (at Mecca or Baghdad)[1]; but except in the general plan which conforms to the ritual of Islam the mosque is a perfectly original design in which the creative mind of the Indian builder is dominant. Even the orientation of the mosque is not orthodox Musalman, for it is like that of a Vishnu temple.

Jahāngīr's favourite wife, Nūr Mahall, who practically ruled the empire, was a Persian by birth, and she loved to imitate the painted tile decoration of her native land in a sumptuous fashion with precious marble inlay, perhaps giving suggestions for the patterns herself. But the Itmād-ud-daulah's tomb at Agra which she built for her father is neither a Persian nor Mogul building. It is Indian, yet something new. Similarly, when the Sultan of Bijāpūr bade his builders make his tomb as fine as that of the Emperors of Rome, they gratified his wishes by making an Indian dome, unique in engineering and unsurpassed in beauty, but not Roman or Turkish. The eclecticism of the Mogul

[1] An inscription to this effect is placed on the mosque.

period was a great opportunity for the Indian builder, and he made full use of it.

Mogul architecture, so-called, can hardly be said to have commenced until the founding of the present city of Agra by Akbar in 1558, opposite to the old city on the left bank of the river which Bābur had made his capital. The latter, who was the first of the Indian Mogul line, expresses in his memoirs a profound contempt for all things Indian, and it is said that he employed architects from Constantinople to carry out his numerous building projects.[1] This may possibly be true, for out of the many buildings erected by Bābur at Agra, Delhi, and Kabul, apparently only two have lasted to the present day—a result which might be expected from the importation of foreign builders unused to Indian technical conditions. In the sixteenth century, moreover, the Indian master-builder had nothing to learn from European methods. Dr. Vincent Smith suggests vaguely [2] that there is some reason for thinking that the grandeur of the proportions of buildings in the north of India and Bijāpūr may be partly due to the teaching of this foreign school; but grandeur of proportion was not a monopoly of the Western schools, and excepting the radiating arch, with which Indian builders of the sixteenth century were perfectly familiar,[3] there is

[1] Vincent Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 406.

[2] Ibid., p. 406.

[3] Fergusson's theory that the Muhammadans taught Indian builders to use the radiating arch is by no means proved. It was used in Babylon before Rome was built, and it is impossible to believe that Indian builders should not have observed its use during the many centuries of India's close commercial intercourse with Mesopotamia, both in early times and in the days of the Roman Empire. It was probably used in brick-building countries, like Bengal, long before the Muhammadan conquest. In other places Indian builders avoided the arch for very good technical reasons.

no peculiarity of design or construction characteristic of Western methods in any Indian buildings of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. If Western craftsmen had taken a leading part in the design of any Mogul buildings, they would certainly have left more tangible evidence of their handiwork than "grandeur of proportions."

The most conspicuous mark of foreign influence in Mogul building first appears in the tomb of Humāyūn (Pl. XLII, B), built early in Akbar's reign when the government was in the hands of Humāyūn's devoted friend and general, Bairām Khan. Humāyūn had won back his throne, from which he had been driven by Shēr Shah, with the help of a Persian army. Akbar's mother was Persian, and there is no doubt that Persian craftsmen had a voice in the design of Humāyūn's mausoleum, though white marble and red sandstone are used as facing materials instead of enamelled tiles. But Humāyūn's court fashions only had a detrimental effect upon the Indian masonic tradition which had found such noble expression in his Afghan rival's tomb at Sahserām a few years before (Pl. XLII, A). The two monuments reveal the character of the men whose remains they cover. Humāyūn's pompous but uninspired monument shows the "grand seigneur," if somewhat shallow and capricious, a brave fighter and charming companion, but incapable as a ruler of men; Shēr Shah's, the stateliest of funeral monuments, a monarch strong both in war and in peace, a strategist and organiser, iron-fisted and unscrupulous, but a ruler of great constructive ability.

When Akbar had grown to manhood and thrown off the tulelage of his Afghan guardian, Bairām Khan, he also took a keen interest in building, and left the

impress of his versatile genius upon his palaces at Agra, the new capital which he built at Fatehpur-Sikri, and his tomb at Sikandra. His great fame and the wealth of his treasury must have attracted craftsmen from all the cities of Asia. Akbar himself was eager to enlarge the range of his knowledge, and in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of his court, where Christians, Jews, Brahmans, Zoroastrians, and Musalmans disputed with each other, and every foreigner who had new ideas to offer was welcome, he had ample opportunity of making himself acquainted with the style of buildings in other countries, but he had no desire to pose as a foreigner or to introduce Mongolian fashions. His new capital was laid out on strictly Indian lines—like one of the royal cities of Rajputana—the Jami Masjid, with its towering gate of victory (Pl. XXXIX, A), taking the place of a Vishnu temple, but oriented in the same way. It is only in some of the decorative details that Persian and perhaps Chinese influence is visible. The symbolic design of his throne chamber in the private hall of audience (Dīwān-i-Khās), where he sat upon a massive Vishnu pillar as a Chakravartin, or ruler of the four quarters, is entirely Indo-Aryan, for Akbar's ambition was to obliterate all sense of foreign domination in the minds of his subjects, and to dissolve religious controversies in a common feeling of loyalty to "a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king."[1] And in having his own tomb at Sikandra planned after the model of an Indian five-storied assembly-hall,

[1] For an account of Akbar's reign and his political and religious ideals, see *History of Aryan Rule in India*, by the Author (Harrap & Co.), pp. 450–557. The buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri are described in the Author's *Handbook to Agra and the Tāj* (Longmans), and in *Indian Architecture* (Murray).

apparently as a meeting-place for the royal Order, the Dīn-Ilāhī, which he founded, Akbar probably had in his mind his great predecessor, Asoka, who united all Aryāvarta in devotion to the saintly Head of the Sangha, the Buddhist religious brotherhood. The Panch Mahall (Pl. XLVIII, A), adjoining Akbar's palace at Fatehpur-Sikri, where most probably the Order met during Akbar's lifetime, is of similar design, the four lower pavilions corresponding to the four grades of the Order, Akbar being enthroned under the domed canopy at the top as Grand Master.

Jahāngīr (1605–27), Akbar's rebellious and unscrupulous son, under whose directions the tomb was completed,[1] altered the original design of the top story where Akbar's cenotaph is placed, omitting the canopy of "curious white and speckled marble, ceiled all within with pure sheet gold richly inwrought," with which, according to William Finch, who visited the mausoleum when it was being built, it was to have been covered.

Akbar kept up a great state ceremonial, but regulated the economy of his public works with great care and exactitude. Jahāngīr, for political reasons, allied himself with the Sunni party, which was bitterly hostile to Akbar's religious views, so that in the buildings of his reign anything which might give offence to orthodox Musalman feeling is studiously avoided. In this he was followed by his son, Shah Jahān; but at the same time both monarchs indulged their luxu-

[1] Neither Jahāngīr's inscriptions nor statements in his memoirs can be taken as proof that the tomb was wholly built according to Jahāngīr's instructions after Akbar's death. It is highly improbable that Akbar neglected to make arrangements for perpetuating his work as founder of the Dīn-Ilāhī; or that Jahāngīr, if he had an entirely free hand in the building of his father's tomb, would have permitted a scheme which departed so far from orthodox Sunni tradition.

rious tastes in the lavish use of the most costly building materials, especially white marble with precious inlay. The commanding influence which women now assumed at the Mogul court—the imperious Nūr Jahān, Jahāngīr's empress, and of her niece, Shah Jahān's beloved Mumtāz Mahall—is shown in the feminine elegance, contrasting strongly with the manly vigour of Akbar's buildings, which characterises the Itmād-ud-daulah's tomb, the Moti Masjid and the Tāj Mahall at Agra, and the Dīwān-i-Khās at Delhi. But all these buildings, as well as the later additions to Akbar's palace at Agra, are natural developments of the Indian craft tradition of pre-Muhammadan times, influenced by the idiosyncrasies of the ruling monarch, and adapted by Indian court craftsmen to the ideas and social conditions of Muhammadan India. It is quite futile to seek for the creative impulse behind them in Samarkand, Timur's capital, or any other of the cities where the Moguls' Turkish ancestors ruled, for every phase of Mogul architecture is essentially Indian.

The Indian type of bulbous or lotus dome which characterises Mogul buildings after Akbar's time most probably was brought to Delhi from Bijāpūr, but it originated in Buddhist India—together with the "horse-shoe" or lotus-leaf arch from which its constructive principle is derived—from a dome of light construction built in an elastic framework, like the thatched roofs of Bengal, tied together internally by the *mahā-padma*, or great lotus—i.e., eight or more radiating bambu or wooden ties which suggested to the builder the mystic lotus. He therefore emphasised the symbolism externally by a band of lotus petals[1] round the neck of the dome, and repeated

[1] The petals are clearly shown in the sculptured relief from Ajantā, Pl. XLII, A.

the lotus flower on the top of it, where the ends of the ribs were joined to the finial. This lotus symbolism is almost universal in the bulbous domes of India, and marks distinctly their native origin, for it would never have entered into the mind of a foreign Musalman craftsman, except one who inherited the traditions of Buddhist India.

The Empress Nūr Jahān, besides the tomb of her father, the Itmād-ud-daulah at Agra, built Jahāngīr's tomb at Shahdara, near Lahore. Her charming apartments in the Agra Palace, known as the Samman Burj, or Jasmine Tower (Pl. XLVII, B), were also probably built after her directions. Mumtāz Mahall afterwards lived in them, and Shah Jahān, imprisoned in his own palace by his son, Aurangzīb, passed his last hours there gazing at the peerless monument he had raised to her memory.

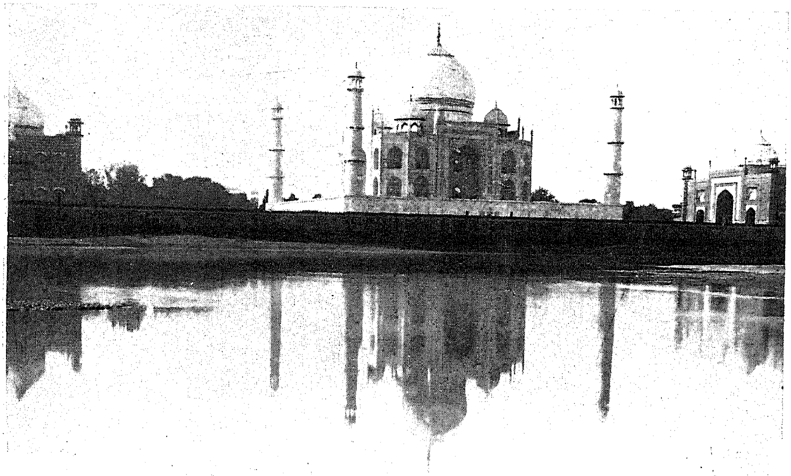
The most famous of Shah Jahān's buildings owe much of their beauty to their faultless contours, the white marble with which they are faced lending itself admirably to the efforts of the masons to achieve this purity of line. The reticence in sculptured ornamentation which orthodox Musalman feeling demanded also helped in the same direction, while its jewel-like enrichment adds to the Tāj Mahall a peculiar feminine charm.

Nearly all critics agree in recognising that this monument, built by Shah Jahān for his most beloved wife, Arjumand Bānū Begam—otherwise Mumtāz Mahall, "the Elect of the Palace"—is unique in its evasive loveliness, so difficult to define in architectural terms, but most expressive of the builder's intentions that the fairest and most lovable of Indian women should have a monument as fair and lovely as herself. In this personal note, however, the Tāj Mahall does

not stand alone, for, as we have already noticed, the Muhammadan rulers of India took so keen an interest in the making of their own tombs that in many cases the personality of the man or woman can be seen almost as distinctly in the architectonic monument as it would have been in the portrait statue which the law of Islam forbade them to make. From a purely æsthetic point of view some may even prefer the epic grandeur of Shēr Shah's tomb to the lyrical charm of the Tāj Mahall.

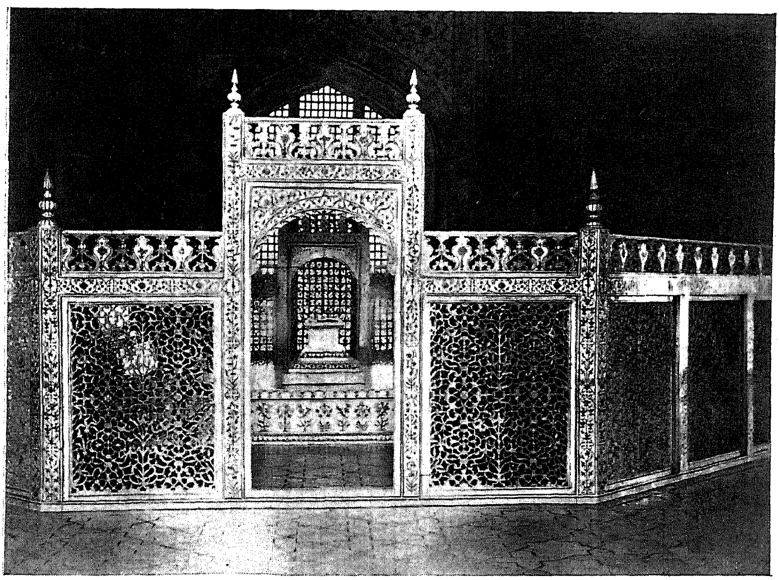
The want of understanding of Indian art which until recently has been universal in Western criticism has led many to give willing credence to vague suggestions that a monument so unique and beautiful could not have been created by Indian builders. These prepossessions are supported by a definite statement recorded by a Spanish Augustinian Friar, Father Manrique, who visited Agra in 1640 when the Tāj was still unfinished, by which the credit for it has been fastened on an Italian adventurer in Shah Jahān's service, one Geronimo Veroneo, who died at Lahore shortly before Father Manrique's arrival, and told his story to a Jesuit priest. Italian adventurers are always credited with abnormal artistic gifts, and his improbable story has been too lightly accepted as proof outweighing all contemporary Indian accounts and—most important of all—the testimony of the Tāj itself. A number of contemporary accounts written in Persian give a detailed list of the chief craftsmen and agree in placing first Master (Ustād) Īsā, or Muhammad Īsā Effendi, described as the "best designer (or draftsman) of his time." The list includes a dome-builder, Ismail Khan Rūmi; two specialists for building the pinnacle surmounting the dome; master-masons from Delhi, Multan, and Kandahar; a master-

Plate La



TĀJ MAHALL, AGRA

Plate Lb



SCREEN SURROUNDING CENOTAPH, TĀJ MAHALL, AGRA

carpenter from Delhi; calligraphists from Shirāz, Baghdad, and Syria; inlay workers who were all Hindus from Kanouj, and a Hindu garden-designer from Kashmir. Ustād Īsā's native place is given variously as Agra, Shirāz, and Rūm (European Turkey). The Turkish title of Effendi which is given him in some MSS. proves nothing as to nationality; and regarding the other foreign craftsmen, one would have to know something of their family history to determine whether they were Indians or not. The so-called Turks may have been Indian craftsmen in the service of the Ottoman Sultans, or of the Sultans of Bijāpūr who had Turkish ancestry.

It is said that Shah Jahān, in consultation with his experts, saw drawings of all the chief buildings of the world—a statement not to be taken too literally—and that when the design was settled a model of it was made in wood. Veroneo appears to have been present at these consultations, and he declared afterwards that he had furnished the design which met with the Pādshah's approval. The silence of the detailed native accounts on this point, and of all contemporary writers besides Father Manrique, would have little significance were it not for the silence of the Tāj itself. It must be inconceivable to any art critic acquainted with the history of the Indian building craft that Shah Jahān, if he had so much faith in a European as an architect, would only have used him to instruct his Asiatic master-builders in designing a monument essentially Eastern in its whole conception, or that Veroneo himself would have submitted a design of this character and left no mark of his European mentality and craft experience upon the building itself. Shah Jahān was professedly a strict Sunni, and probably at the instigation of Mumtāz Mahall, who, like

Nūr Jahān, wielded unbounded influence over the Emperor, he had renewed the destruction of Hindu temples which had ceased entirely during the reigns of father and grandfather. He had broken down the steeple of the Christian church at Agra, and would hardly have outraged Muhammadan orthodoxy and the memory of his beloved wife by employing a Christian as the chief designer of a tomb which was to be peerless in the world of Islam. There is not the least evidence that Veroneo's position at the court was that of a builder or architect. Nearly all Europeans in the Mogul imperial service were artillerists, and it was probably in that capacity that he enjoyed Shah Jahān's favour. Father Manrique's story is not corroborated by any other contemporary writer. Tavernier and Bernier both allude to the building of the Tāj, and they would certainly have given a European the credit due to him if they had heard and believed the tale.

Moreover, the idea that Indian builders of the seventeenth century worked, in the modern European fashion, after measured drawings prepared beforehand by the chief architect, and that the faultless curves of the central dome betray the mind and hand of a foreigner, is altogether wide of the mark. They worked then, as they do now, after a general idea, based upon traditional practice. When the general idea had been settled by Shah Jahān, the execution of it would have been left in the hands of his expert advisers, and the dome built by the dome-builder would be the latter's own creation, not a precise copy of a paper pattern or model set before him. So if Veroneo was so deeply versed in Indian craft tradition that he could design a lotus dome after the rules laid down in the Silpa-Sāstrās, the dome

itself, built by Asiatic craftsmen, would not have been his.[1]

The building of the Tāj commenced soon after Mumtāz Mahall's death in childbirth in 1631, and lasted nearly twenty-two years. Ibrāhīm II, the Shiah Sultan of Bijāpūr, had died five years before its commencement, and the splendid mausoleum which he had raised to the memory of his favourite daughter, Zohra Sultāna, and his wife, Tāj Sultāna, was probably still under construction when Shah Jahān was afflicted by the loss of his beloved Mumtāz Mahall. Ibrāhīm's Tāj Mahall must have been then the latest wonder of the Musalman world, and certainly it was keenly discussed by Shah Jahān and his builders. The dome of the Tāj at Agra is the best proof of that, for it might have been built by the same mason who built the dome of Ibrāhīm's tomb.[2] Both are constructed on the same principles : they are of nearly the same dimensions,[3] and—a fact unnoticed by Fergusson and his followers—the contours of both correspond exactly, except that the lotus crown of the Tāj at Agra tapers more finely and the lotus petals at the springing of the dome are inlaid, instead of

1 A more detailed discussion of the subject is given in *Indian Architecture*, by the Author, chapter ii.

2 Bijāpūr became tributary to Shah Jahān in 1636. Skilled craftsmanship was a form of tribute always so highly prized by Musalman sovereigns that Shah Jahān is not likely to have neglected this opportunity of obtaining the builders he wanted. The dome of the Tāj is nearer to that of Ibrāhīm's tomb than it is to Humāyūn's or the Khan Khānān's tomb at Delhi, which Mr. K. A. C. Creswell, from its close resemblance in plan and general arrangement, takes to be the model of the Tāj (*Indian Antiquary*, July 1915). Both the Tāj and the Bijāpūr domes have the Indian Mahāpadma, or lotus crown, which is never found in Persian or Arabian domes. The plan of the Tāj is also of Indian origin.

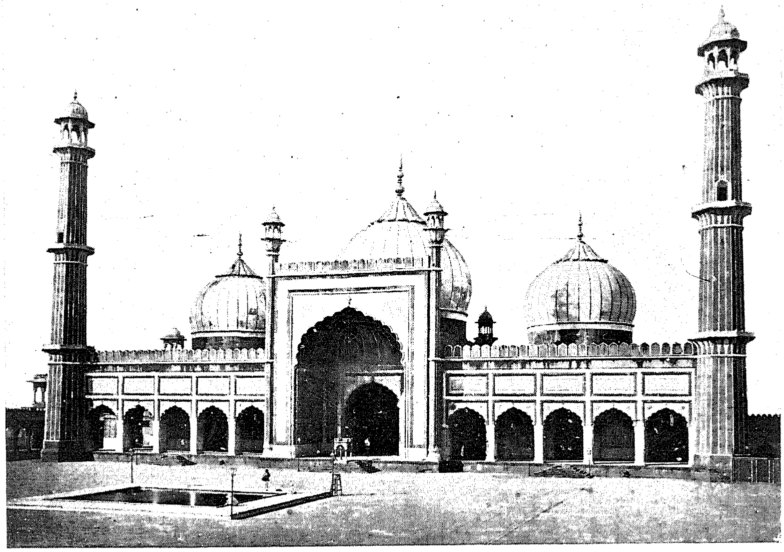
3 The Bijāpūr dome is 57 feet in diameter, the Agra dome 58 feet.

sculptured, in accordance with the whole scheme of decoration.

Naturally, in the general idea of the monument Shah Jahān preferred to follow his own family traditions, rather than those of the Bijāpūr dynasty, and the Sunni propriety of his great-grandfather's tomb at Delhi no doubt appealed to him. The florid sculpture of the Shiah Sultan's tomb was too suggestive of Akbar's catholic tastes; but he could easily excel in the richness of the materials used, for Shah Jahān was the richest monarch in the world, and was prodigal in the spending of his wealth. Nūr Jahān's and Mumtāz's fancy for the *quasi* jewelled marble dictated the choice of materials and the process of decoration. Shah Jahān's Hindu craftsmen with cunning hands made the most brilliant *pietra dura* work in the Persian style,[1] carefully avoiding offence to Sunni prejudices. In the lovely pierced trellis-work which filled the windows and formed the screen with which the cenotaphs were enclosed it is likely that Bijāpūr craftsmen were also employed. Bijāpūr after Ibrāhīm's death could not hold its own politically against the Mogul power, and lost its prestige as a great building centre, while the magnificence of Shah Jahān's building projects lured the best craftsmen towards Agra and Delhi. The Tāj Mahall is, in fact, exactly such a building as one would expect to be created in India of the seventeenth century by a group of master-builders inheriting the traditions of Buddhist and Hindu building, but adapting them to the taste of a cultured orthodox Muhammadan monarch who had all the wealth of India at his disposal. The plan, which consists of a central domed chamber surrounded by

1 The designs of the jewelled inlay were evidently inspired by the borders of the pictures painted by the court painters of the time.

PLATE LIa



SHAH JAHĀN'S MOSQUE, DELHI

PLATE LIb



MOSQUE NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION, BHOPAL

four smaller domed chambers, follows the traditional plan of an Indian *panchratna*, or "five-jewelled" temple. Its prototype, as I have shown elsewhere,[1] is found in the Buddhist temple of Chandi Sewa in Java, built more than five centuries earlier, and in the sculptured stūpa-shrines of Ajantā. Neither Shah Jahān nor his court builders, much less an obscure Italian adventurer, can claim the whole merit of its achievement. The Tāj Mahall follows the rule of all the great architectural masterpieces of the world in not being "a thing of will, of design, or of scholarship, but a discovery of the nature of things in building a continuous development along the same line of direction imposed by needs, desires, and traditions."[2]

Shah Jahān's great mosque, the Jāmi Masjid at Delhi (Pl. LI, A), though strikingly picturesque when its tall minarets and imposing gateways and domes are silhouetted against a sunset sky, does not come up to the level of his other buildings. The design of the līwān is very much bettered in a fine mosque of the same style, and even larger in scale (Pl. LI, B), which is now being built at Bhopal under the personal direction of H.H. the Begam.

Though the great traditions of the Mogul court builders have thus survived in full vigour to the present day, the monuments of the dynasty after the end of Shah Jahān's reign in 1658 are hardly worth notice. Aurangzīb, his successor, broke away completely from the artistic traditions of his dynasty, and, reverting to the strictest rule of the Sunni sect, enforced the law of the Kurān forbidding portrait painting and sculpture, expelled the musicians who had enlivened the Mogul court, withdrew state patron-

1 *Indian Architecture*, by the Author (Murray, 1913), pp. 22–3.

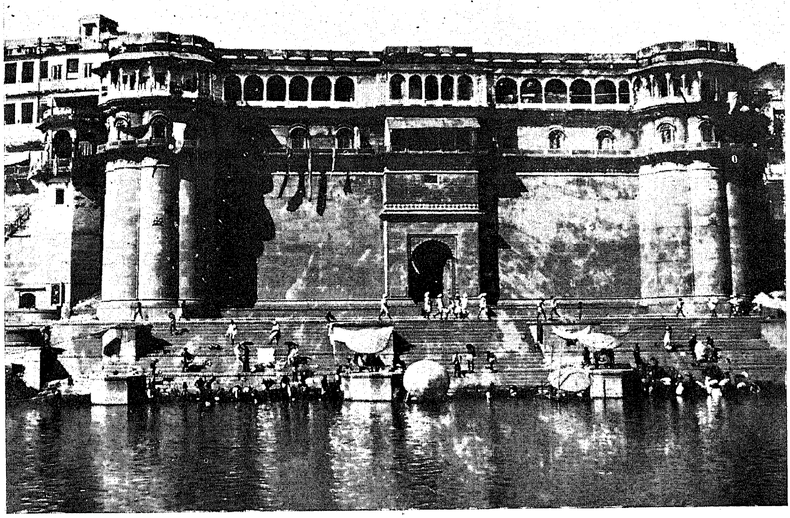
2 *Architecture*, by Professor Lethaby, p. 207.

age from the Hindu craftsmen who had contributed so much to the creation of the greatest monuments of Islam, and set on foot a wholesale destruction of Hindu temples. Aurangzīb's Musalman craftsmen were wholly unable to keep up the high architectural standard of his more tolerant predecessors; but the spendid traditions of the Indian master-builder survived the chaos which accompanied the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire, and in the latter part of the nineteenth century several of the palaces of Hindu princes at Benares (Pl. LII) are architectural achievements of the highest rank, judged by any standard, Eastern or Western.

Even in the present day the Indian building craft retains much of its former vitality, as an investigation by the Archæological Survey of India which I was able to set on foot through the India Society, has amply proved.[1] Unfortunately, many European writers and the Public Works Administration of India have lent support to fiction that all that is great in Indian architecture was created by foreigners, offering an almost insuperable impediment to that perfect fulfilment of the needs and desires of the age which Indian master-builders have always been able to accomplish in former generations. There is, however, some hope that the light thrown upon Indian art history in recent years, and the experience gained in the building of the New Delhi, will help to infuse the life and thought of India into modern state undertakings. A matter of so much educational and economic importance as the preservation of craft traditions, which have shown such amazing vitality and strength in the struggle against the disintegrating forces of modern commer-

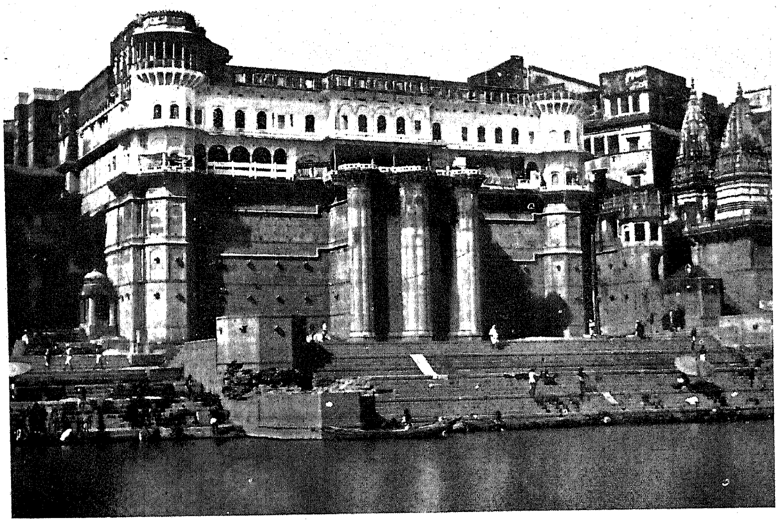
[1] See *Report on Modern Building*, by the Archæological Survey of India, 1913.

PLATE LIIA



NINETEENTH-CENTURY PALACE, BENARES
(Ghoslā Ghat)

PLATE LIIB



NINETEENTH-CENTURY PALACE, BENARES
(Munshi Ghat)

cialism, cannot fail to engage the attention of an India progressing towards the goal of self-government under her new Aryan rulers.

APPENDIX

THE LOTUS DOME

THE symbolism of the lotus flower and leaf is universal in Indian poetry, sculpture, and painting. It is especially applied to the rising or setting sun, which is likened to a lotus flower floating on the cosmic waters—hence the poetic expression of the Buddha's or Vishnu's or Siva's "lotus-foot." The similarity in form of the dormer windows and gable-ends of Indian cottages, when roofed with bent bambu rafters, to the sun's disc as it touches the horizon was doubtless the reason why they were so extensively used as a decorative motive in early Indian art, and why subsequently in Mahāyānist and Hindu art the same form was adapted as the aureole or glory for a Bodhisattva or Deva image.

The hideous archæological terms borrowed from Fergusson, such as "horse-shoe" arch and "bulbous" or "swelling" dome, are meaningless and misleading in their application to Indian artistic symbolism. Mr. K. A. C. Cresswell, in the *Indian Antiquary* for July 1915, attempts to disprove the theory of the Indian origin of the lotus dome by showing that Timūr, in his buildings at Samarkand, made his craftsmen follow the design of the great wooden dome of the Ummayad Mosque at Damascus; *ergo*, he argues, Timūr could not possibly have had in his mind the smaller and inconspicuous solid domes of Ajantā, or any domes he saw in India. Dr. Vincent Smith, pronouncing judgment on the evidence brought forward, condemns the Indian theory as "purely fanciful and opposed to clear evidence," and relegates my "erroneous theory" to a footnote.[1]

The question is not, however, disposed of so easily. Timūr's excursions as an amateur architect are interesting as an

[1] *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 435.

historical episode, but have nothing to do with the origin of ancient craft traditions. Mr. Creswell and Dr. Vincent Smith approach the subject from the old standpoint of academic " styles," which has long been discarded by the expert architectural historian. The question to be decided is not what style or fashion of those days appealed to Timūr's architectural fancy, but what influence the many centuries of Buddhist temple craftsmanship had upon the living building traditions of Western Asia. It cannot have been an entirely negligible factor, as Mr. Creswell assumes. Arabian architecture, like most Arabian culture, was derivative. The dome of the great mosque at Damascus, built early in the eighth century A.D., was certainly not an invention of Saracenic builders, or the first of its kind. The miniature stūpa-domes at Ajantā exhibit the same constructive principle, though they themselves are only a sculptor's representation of real structural domes, with a bambu or wooden framework, which were probably built in thousands by Buddhist temple craftsmen of the same and earlier periods, not only in India, but wherever Buddhism was planted in Asia. If it be granted that these Ajantā domes are not mere fanciful creations of a sculptor's imagination, like the decorative motives of the Italian Renaissance, but exact representations of contemporary buildings—a proposition which can hardly be disputed—it follows that the original domes must have been hollow structural ones, built in the first instance upon a bambu or wooden framework, for it is a physical impossibility to place a solid dome of brick, stone, plaster, or wood, and of a similar design, over a life-size image. The only question to be decided, then, is by what method such hollow domes of large size could have been made structurally possible? Certainly bent bambu ribs must have been used originally to produce the characteristic curve of the dome, just as they were used to form the lotus-leaf arch, or window of early Buddhist buildings, and are used in the roofing of wooden Indian cottages. The use of radiating wooden or bambu ties, like the spokes of a wheel, is suggested in several of the earliest Indian stūpas, e.g. the ancient Jain stūpa found near Mathurā: they would have

been a necessary means of producing stability in bambu or wooden structures of this kind, and the symbolism is peculiarly appropriate for a Buddhist shrine. An inner dome, such as is used in Persia at the present day, to serve as a support for the wheel and for the king-post to which the ribs of the dome were attached at the crown, is a natural development of the same structural principle. But that Persia borrowed the lotus dome from India is certain, for bent bambu in roof-construction is peculiarly an Indian method. Its application to domes is clearly indicated in the domed canopy shown on the Sānchī gateway (Pl. XXI, B), which is the prototype of the so-called Dravidian temple dome and also of the Ajantā stūpa-domes.

The appropriate name, "lotus dome," is not my invention: it was given to it by Indian craftsmen who worshipped the rising sun as the mystic world-lotus and carved its petals at the neck (*griva*) and crown (*mahā-padma*) of the dome. The Indian lotus dome is the technical modification of the primitive hemispherical dome of Mesopotamia, due to the use of bambu and thatch instead of clay in the forest asrams. In the same way the curvilinear sikhara is the technical modification of the conical hut of Mesopotamian and Persian villages. In both cases the forms were fully developed constructively in India many centuries before Indian craftsmen were pressed into the service of Islam and applied the same principle to the roofing of mosques in Arabia and Persia, and eventually to mosques in India.

SECTION II

SCULPTURE

CHAPTER I

THE BUDDHA AS GURU AND AS KING

FERGUSSON'S dictum that the Aryans of Vedic India had no temples needs some qualification, but it seems certain that Vedic ritual on the whole was not idolatrous. Aryan society even in Vedic times included many foreign elements, and the respect shown to the idols of foreigners is shown by the incident of King Dasaratha of Mitanni sending an image of the Assyrian goddess Ishtar to his brother-in-law, the King of Egypt, already referred to.[1] There is one passage in the Mahābhārata which alludes to the idols in the temples of the Kurus, but so far no Aryan images of pre-Buddhist times, or representations of them, have been discovered.

The Buddha maintained the aniconic character of Vedic religion for the very good reason that his teaching was altogether agnostic. The members of the early Buddhist Sangha were as strict in excluding any picture or image of the Blessed One from their stūpas and stūpa-houses as the early Muhammadans were in obeying the injunctions of the Prophet in regard to painting and sculpture. It is not at all probable, however, that this rule was observed as strictly by Buddhist laymen who did not take the vows of the Order. An early legend refers to the Buddha allowing his own portrait to be drawn in silhouette by one of

[1] Supra, p. 59.

his disciples; and long before the Mahāyānist school broke away from the primitive traditions of Buddhism, and sanctioned the worship of the Great Teacher as the Divine Ruler of the universe, Indian idealism must have formed the impression which the painters and sculptors of the Kushān court in Gandhara, about the beginning of the Christian era, tried to shape. Their Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are obviously the gods of the Greek and Roman pantheon adapted to an Indian *nivran*. The Gandharan sculptures in modern museums show how imperfectly these Hellenistic artists realised the true Buddhist ideal. It was left to the Indian mystics who followed them to put into artistic form what they saw in their visions of the Blessed One in the Tushitā heavens, or when He deigned to listen to their prayers and descended to earth to show His divine form to them, as the Devas of old revealed themselves to the Vedic Rishis.

For the two central ideas which run through all Buddhist iconography are as certainly derived from an ancient Indo-Aryan tradition as are the stūpa and the sikhara, to which they are closely related. In the first the Buddha is conceived as the Great Guru, the Muni[1] who by the power of Yoga has obtained full insight into all the mysteries of the universe and has become the teacher of the law. He is the Buddhist counterpart of the Brahman Mahā-Yogi, Siva, worshipped through the *jnāna-marga*, the Path of Knowledge. In the second he is a King, the Supreme Head of the Sangha regarded as a universal Church. The Bodhisattva is the ideal Kshatriya King of the Mahābhārata who has learnt to subdue himself, so that he may dispense divine justice and become God's Vicegerent on earth. But he fights only with spiritual

[1] Monk.

weapons which, like those of the great Aryan heroes, are personified and made to take places in the Buddhist pantheon as various manifestations of the Bodhisattva, e.g. Divine Love, Avalokitēshvara, and Divine Wisdom, Manjusri.

The type of head conforms to fixed tradition regarding marks of identity (*lakshanas*)—e.g., eyebrows joined together; a bump of wisdom on the top of the head (*ushnisha*), covered in the case of the Bodhisattva by the high-peaked tiara; three lucky lines on the neck; the lobes of the ears split and elongated in a fashion still prevalent in Southern India; a mark in the centre of the forehead (*urnā*) symbolising the third eye of spiritual vision. But every school of sculptors impressed its own racial type upon the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas it created. A Gandharan Buddha is unmistakably one of the race to which the Kushān dynasty belonged; an Indian image is of some Indian race. A Chinese image has a Mongolian character. Yet it is very rarely the case that any attempt at portraiture is made, as often happens in Western sacred art: it is an ideal racial type rather than an individual that is represented.

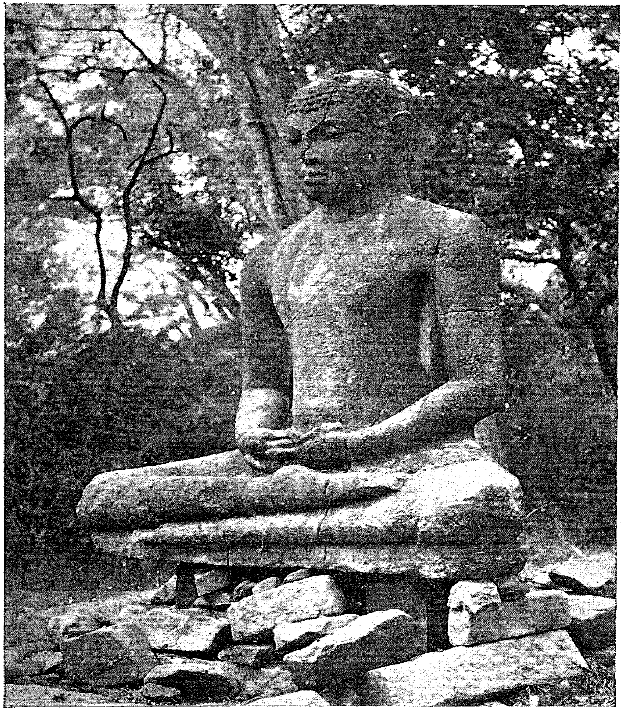
This was also the case in the gods of the pantheon which Greek artists created. The difference between the Indian and Greek ideal lies in the metaphysical outlook. The Indian idea was that Yoga, through which divine wisdom was attained, not only gave the body eternal youth and superhuman strength, but purified it of its physical dross and gave it a finer texture than the common mortal clay. The Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree at Gāyā, reduced to a living skeleton by mental agony and prolonged fasting, was at once supernaturally transformed when the Great Truth of the cause of human suffering flashed

upon his mind. He appeared then like the Devas, the Shining Ones, who thronged to hail him as their Lord, with a body like a lion—that is, with massive neck and shoulders; a narrow waist, and a golden or tawny skin; the veins and bones hidden, supple rounded limbs smooth as a woman's—a superman whose body combined the perfections of either sex but transcended all of them. This was the antithesis of the athletic ideal of classical Greek art based upon earthly notions of a *mens sana in corpore sano.* It was the symbol of spiritual rebirth by which mankind could become even as the gods.

Though this ideal was not realised in perfect artistic form until Indian sculpture and painting reached their zenith in Northern India about the sixth century A.D., the idea itself was of much greater antiquity. The god-like heroes of the Mahābhārata and Indo-Aryan athletes had long arms; in their shoulders, necks, and waists they were like lions. The same type appears in Minoan art of 3000 B.C., where men are shown with their waists pinched in with leathern girdles. It is also prominent in Egyptian and early Greek art. The prolonged Aryan domination of the Euphrates valley probably accounts for its survival in Indian art, as well as for many other evidences of Babylonian culture in India. It was the doctrine of Yoga, however, which gave the idea its characteristic Indian expression, in which the mystic tries to reveal the divine power of thought which controls all physical manifestations, a power which can only be realised when the mind, immovably fixed and undisturbed by worldly desires, attains to perfect tranquillity and the supreme joy of harmony with the eternal.

The two sculptures in Pl. LIII are classical Indian types of the Buddha as the Monk and Guru. The

Plate LIIIa



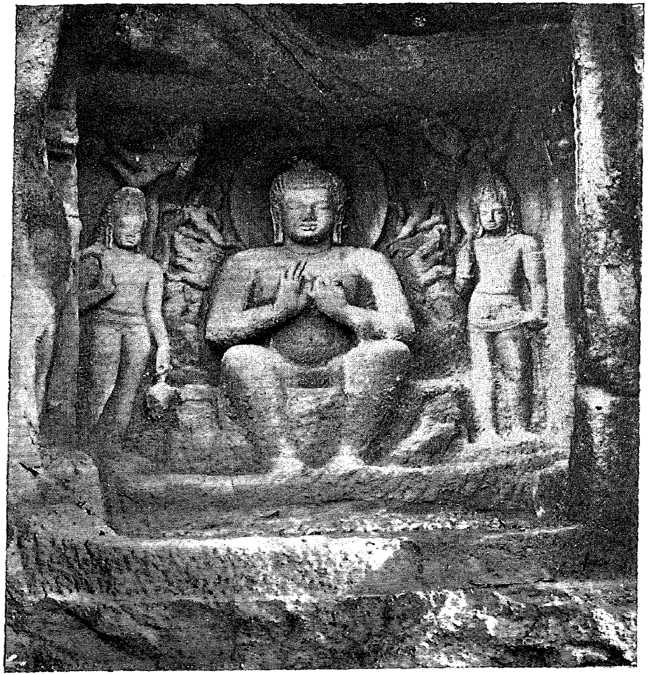
THE BUDDHA, ANURĀDHAPŪRA

Plate LIIIb



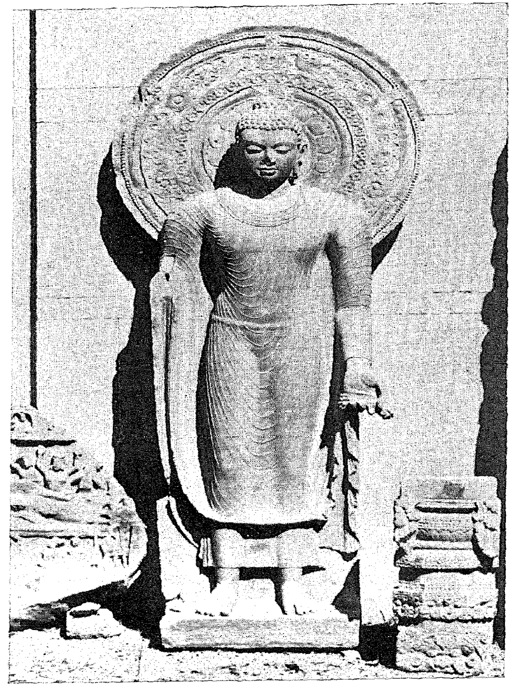
THE BUDDHA, SARNĀTH

PLATE LIVA



THE BUDDHA, AJANTĀ (CAVE IX)

PLATE LIVB



THE BUDDHA, MATHURĀ MUSEUM

first (Fig. A) is a colossal statue at Anuradhapura in Ceylon, no doubt one of the great masterpieces of its age which served as a model for the school to which it belonged. The Buddha is just emerging from the Yoga trance, as indicated by the left leg being released from the "adamantine" pose when the two legs are firmly locked together. It shows the same great sweep of line and masterly generalisation of form which distinguish the classic paintings of Ajantā in India and those of the allied Cingalese school of Sigirīya. We may assume that it was the work of some famous sculptor from Northern India.

Its provenance is clearly indicated in the Sarnath Buddha (Pl. LIII, B), which, though of a later date—probably the fifth or sixth century—has exactly the same type of face. In the first half of the fourth century A.D. the King of Ceylon, Meghavarna, was on very friendly terms with the great Gupta Emperor, Samudragupta, who gave him permission to found and endow a monastery at Bodh-Gāyā. The Anuradhapura Buddha may belong to Meghavarna's reign. The Sarnath sculpture, which is about 5 ft. 3 in. in height, belonged to a temple or monastery in the Deer Park where the Buddha began to preach. It represents the Master enthroned and expounding his doctrine, while a band of disciples at his feet worship the Wheel of the Law. Though it belongs to the same great school as the Ceylon sculpture, it is more dry and academic in treatment. The contours lack the beautiful rhythmic flow of the Ceylon image, and the rather woodeny plastic treatment shows the hand of a copyist lacking in original power of expression.

Both of these Buddhas are dressed in the light diaphanous robe which is characteristic of Gupta sculpture, with a slight difference in arrangement.

In the Ceylon Buddha the left shoulder is bare, whereas the Sarnath sculpture shows the robe giving the neck. Another type of the Buddha as the Ascetic and Teacher is shown in Pl. LIV, A, a sculpture on the face of the rock outside Cave IX at Ajantā. Here the Buddha is seated on his throne, not as a Yogi, but in European fashion; a pose which indicated the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya,[1] who is to be the world-teacher in a new dispensation. It is significant that Buddhism should look to the West for its coming saviour. Possibly the iconographic idea came from Gandhara. Maitreya is usually classed as a Bodhisattva, and sometimes wears the Bodhisattva's crown, but here the attendants on either side are crowned as Kings or Devas, the lesser divinities who are the servants of the Great Teacher. This noble sculpture is more vigorous in expression and masterful in technique than the Sarnath Buddha, and may be earlier in date.

The Buddha as Guru is also represented standing erect with the right hand raised in the gesture known as *abhaya mudrā*, dispelling fear. The splendid statue now in the Birmingham Museum (Pl. LV, A) is of this type. It was excavated from a ruined monastery at Sultanganj, in Bengal, and may be classed with the Anuradhapura Buddha as one of the greatest works of the early Gupta period, testifying to the great skill of North Indian metal founders at this time, for it is about 7½ feet high, of copper cast in sections, probably by the *cire perdue* process on a core held together by iron bands.[2] It is probably of the same age as the famous iron pillar of Delhi, a royal standard of the traditional Vishnu type,

[1] See Waddell's *Lamaism in Tibe.*

[2] The statement of Rajendra Lal Mitrā that it was cast in two layers calls for expert corroboration.

PLATE LVA



THE BUDDHA AS GURU
(Birmingham Art Museum)

PLATE LVB



THE BUDDHA AS GURU (SARNĀTH)

set up about A.D. 415 by Kumāragupta I to celebrate the victories of his father, Vikramādityā, the casting of which was a feat which could not have been achieved in Europe until quite recent times.[1]

The standing Buddha carved in sandstone, now in the Mathurā Museum (Pl. LIV, B), is of the same type as the Sultanganj statue and of nearly equal size, but the execution is more dry and academic, resembling in this respect the Sarnath Buddha. The colossal headless figure (LV, B) recently dug up at Sarnath shows a variation in the pose and drapery, and also a heaviness in the limbs which does not belong to the Indian ideal. It was probably the work of a foreign sculptor at the Gupta court. In most Gupta sculpture there are clear suggestions of Hellenistic influence visible, manifesting itself mostly as technical mannerisms. The ideas which the artist wishes to realise, the real creative impulse, are deeply rooted in Indian thought and go back to pre-Buddhist times.

The Buddha as the ideal King, or Bodhisattva, is very finely realised in the noble torso now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Pl. LVI, A). The sway of the lithe, youthful figure, suggesting the swinging gait of the royal elephant, often used in Indian poetry as a simile for the graceful carriage of a young woman, would alone distinguish the sculptor's intention from the studied, self-disciplined immovability of the Yogi who has attained to full Buddhahood, even if the shoulder-straps of deer's hide and the splendid collar and girdle did not proclaim the Kshatriya prince. The figure is said to have crowned one of the royal standards put up near the great stūpa at Sānchī, but I think it is an error to

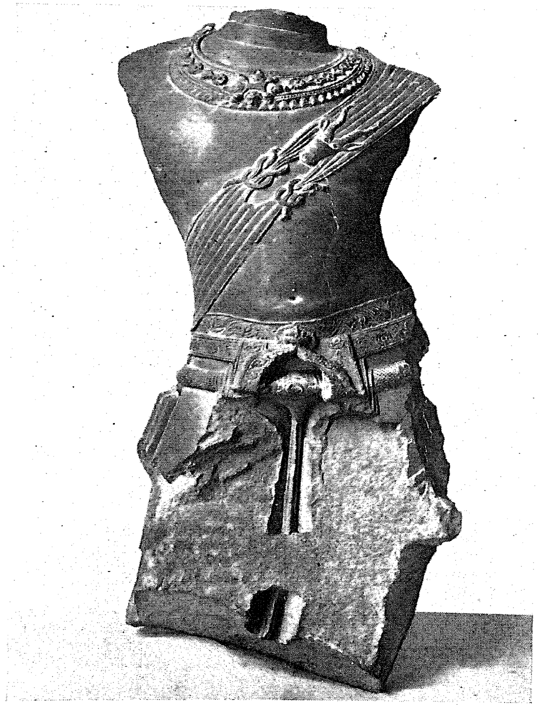
[1] The height of the pillar is about 24 feet, the diameter varying from 16·4 to 12·05 inches.

attribute it to Asoka's time. Royal patronage of the Buddhist abbey of Sānchī continued for many centuries after the stūpa was built by Asoka. It is true that in technique it is fully equal to the best craftsmanship of the Mauryan period: it has, moreover, all the freshness and vitality of the early Sānchī school. But Buddhist orthodoxy did not allow a sculptured image of the Buddha, either as a King or a Guru, until long after Asoka's time. It is clearly the work of an early Gupta sculptor: the Gupta royal standards were of the same lotus pattern as those of Asoka, and at that time Mahāyāna Buddhism had sanctioned the worship of the Buddha's image both as the Teacher and as the King. In the earlier Hīnayāna school a Bodhisattva was only the name for one of the Buddha's previous existences as told in the jātakas: the idea of a divine ruler of the Sangha had not arisen, though the Patriarch of the Order was accorded royal honours as the representative of the Founder.

This torso is clearly distinguished from most Gupta sculpture in bearing no trace of Hellenistic or Gandharan influence, and brings fresh evidence to prove that Indian sculpture was not so deeply indebted to the Gandharan school as archæologists have maintained. The fine image of Sūrya, the Sun-god, from the temple of Kanārak, in Orissa (Pl. LVI, B), will enable us to realise what the missing head of the Bodhisattva was like. It also illustrates the wonderful continuity of Indian artistic traditions, for the two sculptures, though separated from each other by a distance of at least nine centuries,[1] have so many close correspondences that it might almost be thought they were works of the same school. Only the pose differs, for the Sun-god, driving his seven-

[1] The Kanārak temple was built between A.D. 1240 and 1280.

Plate LVIa



TORSO FROM SĀNCHĪ

Plate LVIb



SŪRYA, FROM KONĀRAK

horsed car and, like Vishnu, holding up the heavens, has the same static pose of the Buddha as the Teacher of the Universal Law. Sūrya's active pose when he is shooting the arrows which destroy the demons of darkness is finely given in the relief from the Kailāsa temple (Pl. XXV, B).

Sūrya was one of the ancient Vedic deities worshipped by the Aryans both in India and in Mesopotamia. In Indian art he appears as the Aryan fighting chief in his war-car, which probably played the same part in the Aryan conquest of India as it did in the conquest of Egypt by the Shepherd Kings.[1] The horse introduced into Mesopotamia from Irān about 2,000 B.C. replaced the ass in the war-cars of Babylonia, an innovation which for a time made these early engines of war as irresistible as the tank in modern warfare.

The ideas of Vedic India manifest themselves in Buddhist sculpture and painting as clearly as they do in Buddhist architectural designs. The Buddha as the Guru represents the Brahman or Indo-Aryan thinker who found salvation by the path of knowledge; the Bodhisattva, the Kshatriya or Indo-Aryan hero and leader of men who was the central figure of *bhakti* worship, the path of loyalty or devotion. The reason why there are so many missing links in the chain connecting Indian sculpture and painting with pre-Buddhist times is no doubt the same as that which has prevented the explorer from tracing the evolution of the stūpa and the sikhara. As in ancient Egypt, the houses and palaces of Indo-Aryan nobility were of clay or sun-dried bricks. They were adorned with paintings and carvings, and in spite of the prohibitions of the Vedic Rishis, there were probably icons of house-

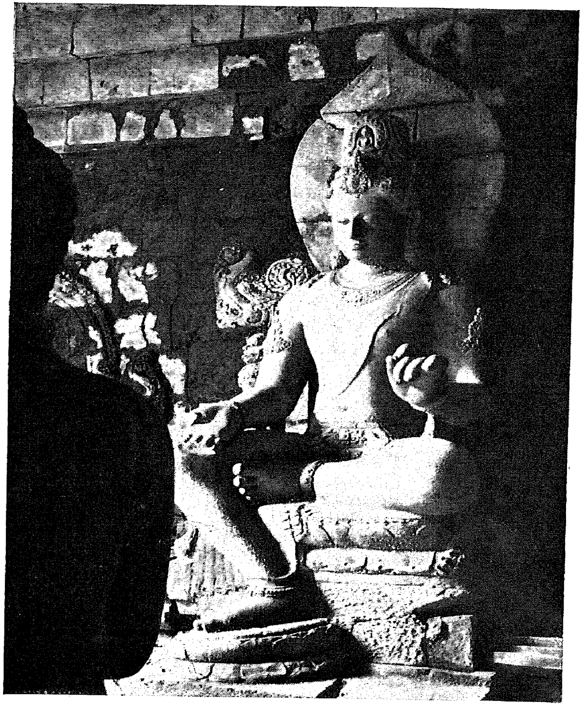
[1] See *Ancient History of the Near East.* H. R. Hall, p. 213.

hold and tribal deities in them long before Mahāyāna Buddhism gave them its sanction. But Aryan sculpture of the pure Vedic tradition was perhaps almost exclusively made of the various sacrificial woods particularised in the Rāmāyana,[1] which could not long resist the attacks of insects and other destructive influences of the Indian climate. In the land of the five rivers, the Panjab, where the first Aryan settlements were located, the constant shifting of the river beds would in course of time completely obliterate the towns and villages built upon their banks; and as bathing was an indispensable part of Aryan religious ritual, we may assume that the earliest settlements were always located on the banks of the sacred rivers. Fresco-painting on mud wall and sculpture in wood are the most fugitive of historical records in India, so it is not surprising that no vestiges of their existence before Asoka's time have been discovered. But there is no good reason for supposing that the Indo-Aryans were less proficient in the fine arts than any other section of the Aryan family.

Fragmentary though the record is, it would take many volumes to illustrate fully the variations in the two original types of Buddha images, for Buddhist culture spread itself all over Asia, bringing with it wherever it went the traditions of Indian sculpture and painting. In Java, which was colonised from India early in the Christian era, the best period of Indian sculpture is very fully represented, both in its Buddhist and Brahmanical aspect, for the island escaped the iconoclastic rage of the Muhammadans which desolated the temples and monasteries of India. Two fine examples of the Bodhisattva type from Java are given in Pl. LVII. The first is a finely inspired

[1] See *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the Author, p. 10.

Plate LVIIa



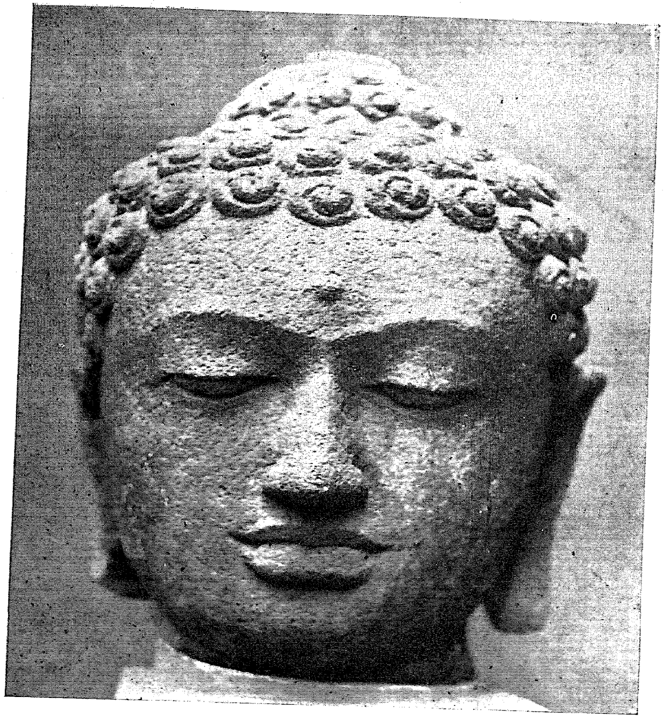
BODHĪSATTVA, JAVA

Plate LVIIb



BODHĪSATTVA FROM PRAMBĀNAM, JAVA

PLATE LVIII A



HEAD OF THE BUDDHA, JAVA

PLATE LVIII B



HEAD OF THE BODHĪSATTVA, JAVA

conception of Avalokitēshvara, or Padmapāni, the Bodhisattva of divine love and pity, seated on his lotus throne, the up and down turned petals of which are symbols of the heavenly and earthly spheres. He is in the pose of "royal ease," i.e., with the right leg completely released from the meditative position. His right hand, with the palm turned upwards, makes the gesture of charity (*vara-mudrā*), the left expounds a point of the Law. The similarity between the royal insignia worn on the body, the jewelled collar, shoulder-band, and girdle, and those on the Sānchī torso (Pl. LVI, A), will be noticed. Borobudūr was built about the second half of the ninth century A.D., and this sculpture may be a century or two later. The graceful standing figure B of the same plate belongs to the temple of Chandi Sewa at Prambānam, which is supposed to have been built about the end of the eleventh century. A cast of it is in the Trocadéro in Paris.

The two beautiful heads illustrated in Pl. LVIII are also from Java. The Buddha type, Fig. A, is now in the Ethnological Museum at Leyden. The Bodhisattva, Fig. B, is in the Glyptotek at Copenhagen.

CHAPTER II

BRAHMĀ, VISHNU, AND SIVA, AND THEIR *SAKTIS*

We must now pass on to consider the divine ideal represented by the Brahmanical deities, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva, who are worshipped separately and also jointly as the Three in One. The Silpa-Sāstras, as already mentioned, ordain that Brahmā's shrine shall be open on all four sides, that Vishnu's shall face the east, and Siva's the west. Brahmā, the personification of prayer, is the Creator symbolised by the rising sun, which gives the signal for morning prayer. Brahmā's *sakti*, or active principle in nature, is Sarasvati, the lady of the lotus-pool, goddess of speech and learning. Her flower, the pink or red lotus, whose petals unfold at the magic touch of the sun's first rays, is the symbol of the womb of the universe, *Hiranya-garbha*, hidden in the depths of the cosmic waters from which Brahmā, self-created, sprang. In Indian art Brahmā is often shown seated in Yogi fashion as the Great Magician upon the mystic lotus which springs from the navel of Vishnu Nārāyana, the Eternal Spirit. He also appears riding on the swan or wild goose, the king of the lotus-pool, whose Sanskrit name, *hamsa*, is convertible into the mystic formula SA-HAM—I AM HE, that is Brahmā.

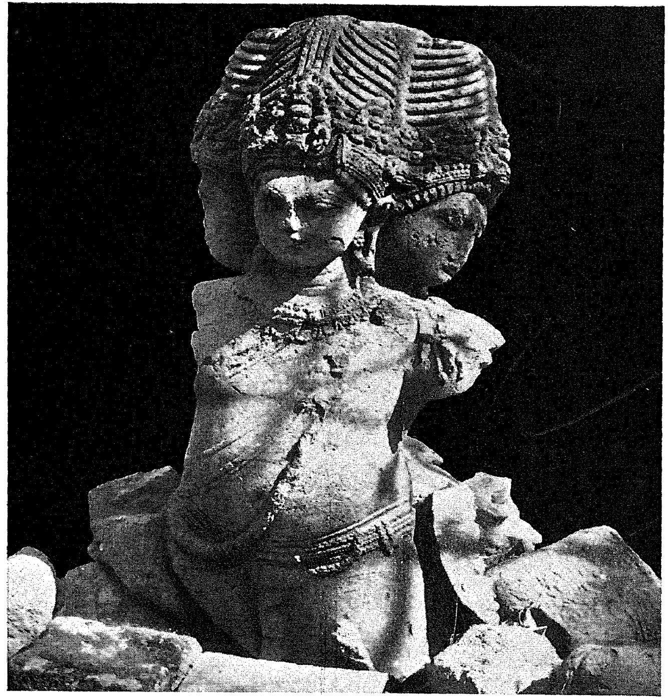
Brahmā's four heads are said to symbolise the four Vedas, but as the Vedas were originally only three in number, a different meaning must be sought. It was

Plate LIXa



BRAHMĀ, JAVA

Plate LIXb



SIVA AS BRAHMĀ, ELEPHANTA

more likely an iconic equivalent of the royal title, "King of the Four Quarters," adopted by all Egyptian kings from about 2,000 B.C., and brought to India by the Aryans from Mesopotamia. The Indo-Aryan kings used the term *Chakra-vartin* as an equivalent, implying that the world was a round plane, whereas in Egypt it was thought to be square.

Temples of Brahmā are now very rare, but in every Siva temple the Creator is worshipped in the ancient Mesopotamian solar symbol of the bull and in the *lingam*. At the great temple of Elephanta, dating from about the seventh century A.D., the cubical shrine with four doors guarded by the eight regents of the quarters is a Brahmā shrine. It was originally occupied by the superb sculpture shown in Pl. LIX, B. The *lingam* is here metamorphosed into an image of Brahmā[1] as King of the Four Quarters, the top of the *lingam* which surmounted the fourfold royal tiara being broken. The Buddhist had an equivalent symbol in a cubical shrine surmounted by a stūpa to represent the Adi-Buddha, the Creator, whose consort, or *sakti*, was Prajnāpāramitā, transcendental wisdom, an idea evidently borrowed from the Vedic idea of Brahmā. It is probable that the Saiva *lingam* very frequently took this form of a Brahmā image before Muhammadan iconoclasm compelled Hindu sculptors to content themselves with the plain *lingam* now used as a symbol of the Creator.

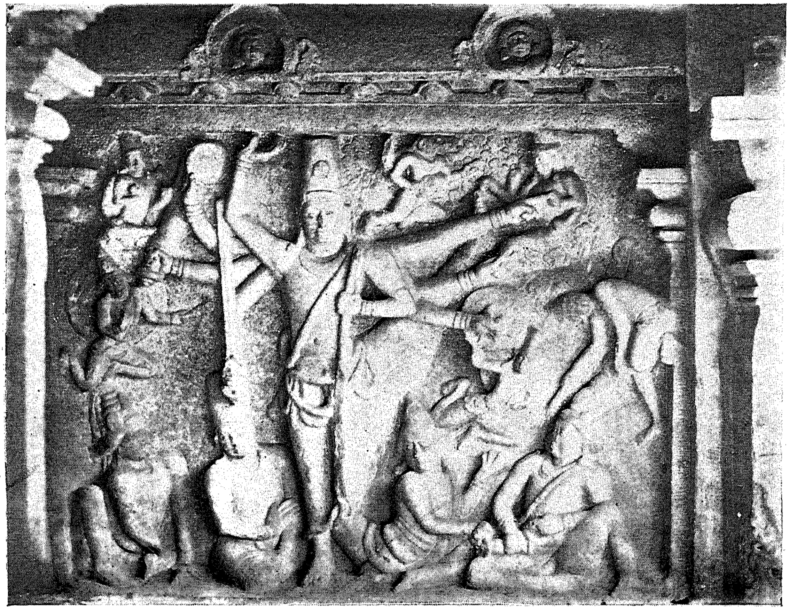
A fine statue of Brahmā from Java (Pl. LIX, A), now in the Ethnographic Museum at Leyden, gives a different but very dignified conception of the Grand-

[1] The esoteric teaching of the Saiva-Siddhāntins indicates this image as Sadāsiva-mūrti, the formless, incomprehensible Brahman (see *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, by T. A. Gopinath Rao, vol. ii, part ii); but as it is obviously impossible for the temple sculptor to render such abstract conceptions, he gives them a popular interpretation.

sire of the human race, and more complete than the mutilated sculpture of Elephanta. Here the faces are bearded, as in all the Java representations of Brahman sages. The clasped hands in front of the body hold a vessel in the form of a lotus bud containing the elixir of life. His other attributes appearing in the sculpture are the hermit's jar for the holy water which gives life to the earth, the lotus flower, and the royal swan. Those which are missing are the Brahman hermit's sacrificial ladle and his rosary.

Brahmā, originally the Supreme God of the Brahmans, has now been merged in the two chief cults of modern Hinduism, centred in the worship of Vishnu and Siva. Vishnu, as his name signifies, is said to pervade all space: he is *Ākāsha-garbha*, the Container of Ether. But as distinguished from Brahmā he is the sun at noon supporting the heavens (Vishnu-Sūrya), or the sun at midnight under the earth reposing on the coils of the serpent of eternity (Ananta or Sēsha), the Milky Way. In this aspect he is known as Vishnu-Nārāyana. His colour is blue, the deep transparent blue of the Himālayan sky after the monsoon rains, and his flower, as we have seen, is the blue lotus, or water-lily. His shrine should face the east, so that Lakshmi, the Day-goddess, his bride, may enter as she rises from the cosmic ocean every morning to greet her spouse. He rides on Garuda, the Himālayan eagle. In his universal form as the all-pervading, everlasting Cause he is described in the Bhagavad Gītā as too terrible for ordinary mortal vision.[1] But as the supporter of the heavens, and as the midnight sun slumbering under the cosmic ocean, he is represented as the Aryan warrior king armed with the terrific weapon, the *Chakra* or discus, besides the sword, bow,

[1] See *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the Author, pp. 56–7.



VISHNU, MĀMALLAPURAM

PLATE LXB



VISHNU-NĀRĀYANA, MĀMALLAPURAM

and mace. His *sakti*, Lakshmi, the bringer of prosperity, seems to be identical with the Dawn Maiden Ushas, who, clad in robes of saffron and rose-colour, like the Brahmā lotus flower, flings open the doors of the sky. To her many of the songs of the Rig-Veda are addressed, especially the immortal inspired hymn I. 113, which invokes her thus:

> The heaven-born Ushas in days gone by continually hath dawned. Giver of wealth, may she shine forth to-day; thus may she give light hereafter, undiminished and undying continuing in her glory.
>
> Ushas, child of heaven, illumineth with her beams the whole expanse of sky. Throwing off the robes of night and awakening the world, she cometh in her car by ruddy horses drawn.
>
> Arise! the breath of our life hath come back to us! The darkness hath gone, the light approacheth! She leaveth a pathway for the sun to travel, so that now our days will be lengthened.
>
> Chanting the praises of the brightening Dawn, the singer invoking thee stretcheth the web of his hymn. Bounteous Ushas! Shine upon him who praiseth thee! Grant us the blessing of food and offspring.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Mother of the Devas! Aditi's[1] rival, Banner of Sacrifice, magnificent Ushas, arise! Beloved of all, shine upon us, bless our prayers and make us chief among the people.

The famous monolithic granite sculptures at Māmallapuram include two fine reliefs, given in Pl. LX, which show Vishnu in his active and passive aspects. In Fig. A he is an eight-armed warrior-king upholding the heavens with one hand and holding his discus, mace, sword, and shield, and his war-trumpet, the conch, in others.[2] The ascent of the sun towards its zenith is symbolised by the image of Brahmā on his right hand seated on his lotus throne and carried up by the sun's disc personified. The descent is shown on the

[1] Aditi, the Universal Mother.

[2] For the mystical interpretations of Vishnu's arms given in the Purānas, see *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the Author, p. 153.

other side by the falling disc partly covered by Vishṇu's shield and by the image of Siva, whom Vishṇu is touching with one finger and one toe, an allusion to the three strides in which the sun is said to complete his daily round. On the right of Vishnu's head is his Boar incarnation, Vāraha, the form which he is said to have taken when he raised the earth from the depths of the ocean, whither she had been carried by a demon, Hiranyaksha. The four figures grouped at his feet are the guardians of the four quarters. The panel in Pl. LX, A, shows Nārāyana in his cosmic slumber, the coils of Ananta forming his couch. The figures on the right refer to a solar myth regarding a demon who, evading the doorkeeper of Vaikuntha, Vishnu's palace, attempted to steal the sleeping god's mace. It will be noticed that Vishnu as the night sun only possesses the normal number of arms: the multiple arms of Vishnu-Sūrya are probably intended to suggest the rays of the midday sun.

The wonderfully fine relief given in Pl. LXI is an unusual representation of Nārāyana as King of the Nāgas in the snake world of the cosmic ocean, seated in the pose of "royal ease" on the coils of Ananta, but with four arms bearing only the Chakra and war trumpet. Two graceful Nāginis, the snake-goddesses whose magic powers and seductive charms play a great part in Indian folk-lore, together with two male genii, flit lightly as butterflies round the deity bringing their offerings. The playful rhythm of their sinuous serpentine bodies, drawn by a most accomplished hand, fill the whole sculpture with the sense of supreme delight which is said to belong to Vishnu's paradise. It is carved on the ceiling of an old temple at Aihole, dated about the seventh or eighth century A.D., near Bādāmi, the ancient capital of

the Chalukyan kings, and the great art centre which created the Kailāsa at Ellora.

Vishnu as the Pillar of the Universe or personification of the sacred mountain Meru,[1] which stands in the centre of the world, is finely given in the monumental statue from Java (Pl. LXII, A). Here he has the usual four arms holding the discus, mace, war-trumpet, and sword. One of the ten Avatars, or incarnations of Vishnu, the Vāraha or Boar Avatar, has been alluded to above. This is the subject of a very powerful rock-sculpture at Udayagiri, in the Bhopal State (Pl. LXII, B), which shows a colossal figure of the Avatar standing upon the serpent of eternity and lifting up the earth, a small female figure, from the depths of ocean, while the assembled gods and sages stand by to welcome her.

The ten Avatars of Vishnu are, first, the Fish which saved the progenitor of the human race, Manu, from the Flood. Second, the Tortoise, the dome of heaven which he placed at the bottom of the cosmic ocean to serve as a pivot for the great churning which brought to earth the lovely goddess Lakshmi, or Srī. Third, the Boar. Fourth, the Man-lion, *Narasimha*, who rescued Vishnu's faithful worshipper, Prahlāda, from the persecution of his impious father, the King of the Asuras, who attempted to usurp the sovereignty of the Lord of the Universe. This is the subject of a fine sculpture at Ellora. Fifth, the dwarf Vāmana, a form Vishnu assumed when he appeared before another demon king, Bali, who, like Prahlāda's father, tried to usurp Vishnu's throne, and begged of him as much land as he could cover in three steps. When Bali

[1] The *Meru* of the human body is said to be the spinal column.

agreed, Vishnu in his real form strode across the whole earth. Sixth, under the name of a Brahman warrior king, Parasu-Rāma, who is said to have destroyed the whole race of Kshatriyas twenty-one times. Seventh, when he appeared as Rāma, the ideal Indian king, the hero of the Rāmāyana. Eighth, as Krishna, whose religious doctrine forming the philosophical basis of the Vaishnava cult is expounded in the Bhagavad Gīta. Ninth, as the Buddha, a Brahmanical commentary stating that this was the Avatar which Vishnu assumed to lead demons and sinners to their own destruction. Lastly, Vishnu's tenth incarnation, not yet consummated, will be that of Kalkin, who will come riding on a white horse, sword in hand, to restore the Aryan law of righteousness and rule the earth.

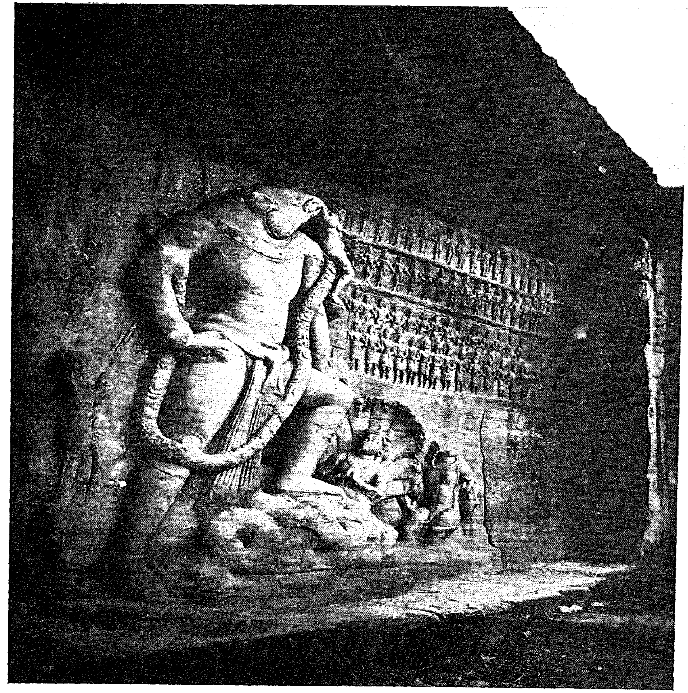
As might be supposed, the coming of the Day-goddess, Vishnu's bride, over the Himālayan peaks has often inspired the Indian poet and artist; and this appears to be the foundation of the well-known myth of Vishnu's second Avatar, the Kūrma, or Tortoise, in which form he assisted at the Churning of the Ocean, as told in the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana, and the Vishnu Purāna. In order to restore to the three regions of earth, air, and heaven their lost prosperity, Vishnu, it is said, instructed the Devas, the Shining Ones, to join with the demons of darkness, the Asuras, in churning the cosmic ocean, the Sea of Milk, for the nectar of life of immortality, *amrita*. So the Devas came to the shores of that sea, which shone like the shining clouds of autumn, and with Vishnu's help upturned the holy mountain, Mandara, to serve as a churning-stick, while the great serpent Ananta, whose coils encircle the earth, was used as a cord. Vishnu himself, in the form of a

PLATE LXIIA



VISHNU AS THE UNIVERSAL PILLAR, JAVA

PLATE LXIIB



VISHNU'S RAISING THE WORLD FROM THE FLOOD
(BOAR-INCARNATION)

mighty tortoise, made a pivot for the stick. The Devas seized the tail of the serpent and the Asuras the head—and the churning began.

The first product of the churning was the divine cow, Surabhi, the fountain of milk, a metaphor often used in the Vedas for the rain-cloud which dispelled drought; then Vāruṇī, Vishnu's own embodied radiance[1]; next the tree, Pārijāta, which bears all kinds of celestial fruits; then the moon rose and was seized by Siva as his own. At this point fires and poisonous fumes engendered by the churning overspread the earth and threatened the whole universe, so the Creator, Brahmā, intervened and begged Siva to use his power. The latter then swallowed the poison and so became *Nila-kantha*, blue-necked.

The climax is the appearance of the physician of the Gods, Dhanwantāri, bearing the treasure sought for, the precious cup of *amrita*, in his hands, followed by the goddess Lakshmi herself, radiant with beauty and attended by a choir of celestial nymphs, while the elephants of the skies, the rain-clouds, pour water over her from golden vases. The Devas and Asuras began now to struggle for the possession of the *amrita*, but the demons were quickly vanquished and driven down to Pātāla below the earth. So the cosmic dramà ends with the return of prosperity to all the three worlds, and the general rejoicing of gods and men.

The myth has been given a spiritual interpretation as the struggle which takes place within the soul of man between the powers of good and evil; but it has not been observed by Oriental scholars that the

[1] See *Tantra of the Great Liberation*, translated by A. Avalon, p. xxxviii. Vāruṇī has been incorrectly translated as the "God of Wine."

original naturalistic foundation of it is to be found in the wonderful effects which may be witnessed on any still autumn starlit night in the Himālayas, at Darjeeling or elsewhere. Climbing a high hill commanding a wide prospect over the distant snowy range, the meaning of the poet's comparison of the Sea of Milk to the "thin shining clouds of autumn" can be realised; for one looks down upon a vast motionless sea of milk-white clouds stretching out to the far horizon, and dotted here and there with islands formed by the highest mountain peaks. Stretching across the deep blue vault of heaven, the Milky Way, the Great Serpent of Eternity, encircling the earth, is seen, the planets glittering like jewels in his many heads. In the solemn stillness of the night Sēsha watches ceaselessly while Nārāyana sleeps upon his coils. No wonder that the Indian mystic meditating on the marvellous prospect in front of him feels himself transported to the shores of the cosmic ocean, to the edge of that limitless expanse of *ākāsha* in which all the worlds lie floating.

Then towards morning, before it is yet dawn, there is a sudden stirring in the air and the Sea of Milk begins to be agitated. The Dēvas, the bright spirits of the day, as yet invisible, have seized the tail of the Serpent and the churning of the cosmic ocean has begun. The clouds begin to break up into whirling wreaths of evaporation, and it seems as if the depths of the valleys below formed a vast cauldron wherein gods and demons are brewing some mysterious potion. Or is it the smoke of the sacred fire-drill they are turning for the worship of the coming day? A faint reflection on the horizon of Vārunī, the radiance of day, now heralds the approach of the Sun-god's seven-horsed car. The crescent moon which had risen some hours before

begins to set on Kinchinjunga's mighty crest. Siva has seized it as his own.

Suddenly upon some of the highest snow-peaks in the far distance there are flashes of crimson light—all creation seems to be ablaze and threatened with destruction. The clouds gather together in a thick clammy mist which quickly envelops mountain and valley, and covers the whole prospect with a dull pall of grey. It might seem for a moment as if the powers of darkness were gaining strength, and that the Dēvas were being worsted in the struggle. But presently the mist which enshrouds the mountains is parted in front of you as if by a magician's wand, and Kinchinjunga is revealed, glittering like silver in the morning sunshine, with a band of exquisite violet blue. Siva has drunk the poison which threatened the world's dissolution and become "blue-necked." Lakshmi has at last risen from the depths of darkness, bringing the divine nectar with her: the morning showers which greet her coming have cleared the air, and all nature rejoices once more at the defeat of the evil spirits of night, who disappear into the nether world.

Lakshmi in the myth is clearly the Vedic Ushas under another name. Vishnu's twofold aspect is distinctly drawn. At the beginning he is Nārāyana, the Eternal Being under the cosmic waters; at the end he is the Sun-god at whose bidding the lovely goddess of the day rises from the depths of darkness. The subject is often treated in Indian sculpture. In the monuments of the classic period now extant it is not often found, but at Sānchi we have seen Lakshmi transformed into Māyā, the mother of the Buddha. The rising of Lakshmi from the cosmic waves is very finely given in one of the superb granite sculptures

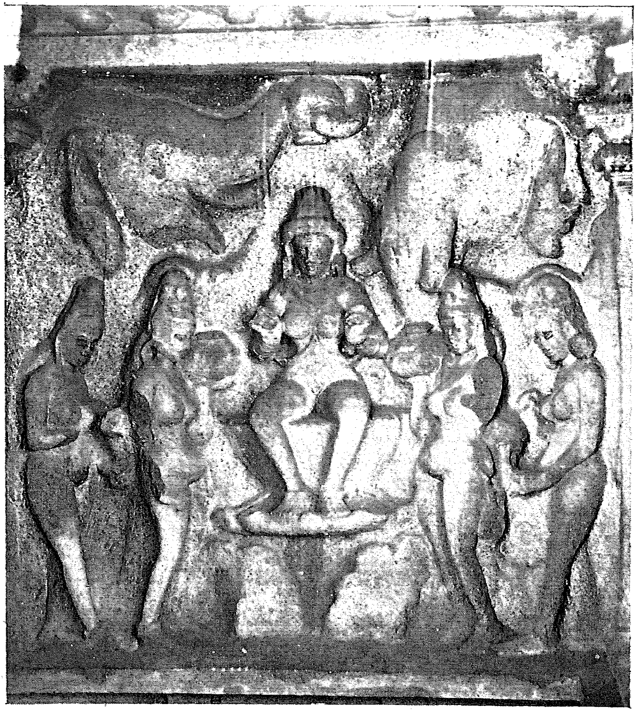
of Māmallapuram (Pl. LXIII, A). Here the goddess is enthroned on the Brahmā lotus with turned-down petals; four river-goddesses are in attendance bringing water for her morning bath, assisted by the Elephants of the Skies, which form a canopy over her head.

The actual churning is rendered on a grand scale in the bas-reliefs of the procession path of the great temple of Augkor Vat in Cambodia, built about the twelfth century by Sūrya-Varman II, one of the last of the Hindu kings who ruled over the Indian colony in the Far East. Pl. LXIII, B, shows the central portion where Vishnu, manifesting himself in several Avatars, is directing the churning. Below he is the Great Tortoise. In the middle he appears in his four-armed form joining hands with the Devas and Asuras. At the top he is holding the churning-stick in its place.

The legends of Rāma and of Krishna, the seventh and eighth Avatars, fill a great part in Vaishnava poetry and painting, but they do not take a very prominent place in classical Indian sculpture now extant. Rāma in temple images and as a household god is the typical Indo-Aryan king. His faithful ally, Hanuman, the monkey-king whose devoted service enabled him to rescue Sītā from the stronghold of the demon-king, Rāvana, is often rendered with the sympathy and keen observation of animal life characteristic of the best Indian art (Pl. LXX, B). Krishna is commonly represented either as an infant cradled on a lotus leaf and floating upon the cosmic waters—a counterpart of Nārāyana—or as a child-hero dancing upon the serpent Kaliya, which infested a whirlpool in the Jumna.

The cult of Vishnu, centred in the idea of *bhakti*, the loyal devotion, as of the soldier to his chief (as in the

PLATE LXIIIA



LAKSHMĪ RISING FROM THE OCEAN

PLATE LXIIIB



THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

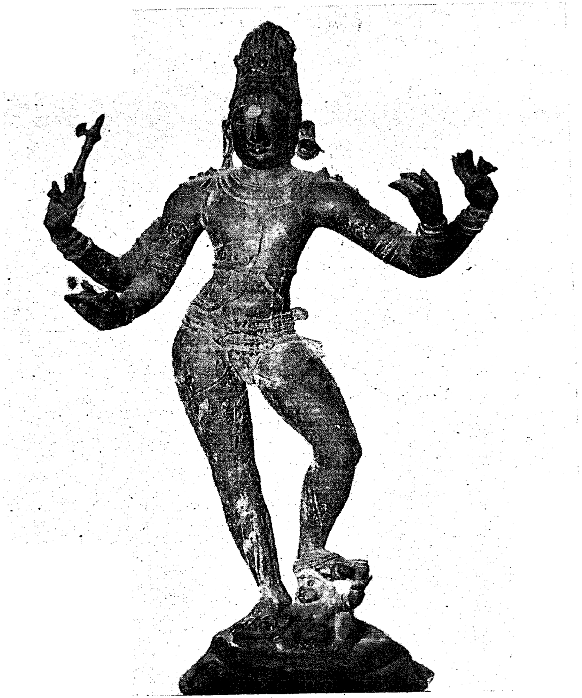
Mahābhārata); or of the wife to her husband (as in the Rāmāyana); or of two lovers to each other (as in later Vaishnava poetry), belongs essentially to the Kshatriya religious tradition embodied in the epics of ancient Aryan royalty, like the sikhara which formed the spire of the royal chapel and bore upon its summit the Kshatriya king's ensign of universal sovereignty. The Saiva cult borrowed the *bhakti* idea, but took the Brahmanical standpoint that the nearest way to salvation was the *jnāna-marga*, the way of knowledge. In this respect, as well as in its ascetic tendencies, it is closely allied to Hīnayāna Buddhism.

Siva, as distinguished from Brahmā and Vishnu, represents the *tāmasic* or destructive power of the cosmos, and has the setting sun and the waning moon as his emblems. But Siva's followers do not always observe the rule of the Silpa-Sāstrās that his shrine shall face the west, but give it the benign aspect towards the rising sun, because he is regarded by them as representing all three of the cosmic *gunas*. Image-worship on the whole, with all its elaborate temple ritual, was the almost inevitable concomitant of the *bhakti-marga*, a response to the human impulse which craves for the sight of the object of hero-worship, whether it be human or divine. Only the philosopher, or those who are under the compulsion of a stern hierarchical decree, can resist the craving. Vedic religion tried to satisfy it by using the sun and moon and nature elements as its symbols, but the Rishis who taught divine wisdom were worshipped as equal to or sometimes even greater than the gods. Vaishnavism made the person of the king, the son and representative of the deity, the object of devotion. The early Buddhists, forbidden to worship the graven

image,[1] paid homage to their living and dead saints—those who had reached Nirvāna. But when Buddhism entered upon the *bhakti-marga*, the popular craving could not be resisted. Similarly the philosophic Brahman, when he tried to gain converts to the *jnāna-marga* among the masses, was forced to show them the image of the Great Yogi and the place where He dwelt on earth. The comparative lateness of the appearance of Saiva temples and images should not, however, be taken as evidence of the late origin of the cult. The way of knowledge is always the most difficult to find, and the abstruse philosophic ideas which form the basis of Vedic wisdom are not those which appeal directly to popular imagination. Moreover, the Brahmans, as the special custodians of the Vedic tradition, would naturally be the last to sanction any deviation from the Vedic forest ritual, in which wood, thatch, and clay were deliberately chosen for the temple service in preference to more permanent and costly materials. Siva's abode is placed in the Himālayas, and the cult which is so distinctively Brahmanical had its original Indian home in the north, though its early ideals and symbols may have been brought by the first Aryan invaders from Iran or Mesopotamia. But at the present time the Saivas predominate in the south, and the best of the Saiva sculpture now extant mostly belongs to the period of the Chola Empire, or from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries A.D., when the disturbed

[1] The prohibition of the graven image by the Buddha and later religious reformers was probably directed against its common employment in sorcery and the black art rather than against its use as an aid to religious devotion. The making of the image of an enemy who was to be destroyed was a usual part of the ritual of the sorcerer; and belief in the effect of his spells was at the root of the furious iconoclasm which so often attended popular religious movements.

PLATE LXIVA



SIVA AS CONQUEROR OF DEATH

PLATE LXIVB



DŪRGĀ

condition of Northern India must have driven many Brahmans and craftsmen from Aryāvarta to take service under the powerful Hindu monarchs of the south. The few classic examples at Elephanta, Ellora, and elsewhere are several centuries earlier. In the south, also, the traditions of the Saiva temple images survive to the present day, whereas in Northern India the Saivas, probably under the compulsion of Muhammadan rulers, generally substituted the lingam for iconic symbols of Siva. It should be remembered, however, that the traditions of Saiva art in the south are attributed, even by the craftsmen of the present day, to the teaching of Indo-Aryans from the north.

We have already observed that the principle of the design of Saiva or Dravidian temples is derived from the ṣtūpa. The two leading types of Buddhist imagery, the Yogi and the Bodhisattva king, also appear in Saiva sculpture, with this difference, that, even when absorbed in meditation, Siva is never shown in temple images without the royal tiara. The Great Yogi is represented in the sculptures at Elephanta, and is thus shown as a crowned king; but in Saiva sacred literature he often appears in the ordinary guise of a Brahman ascetic.

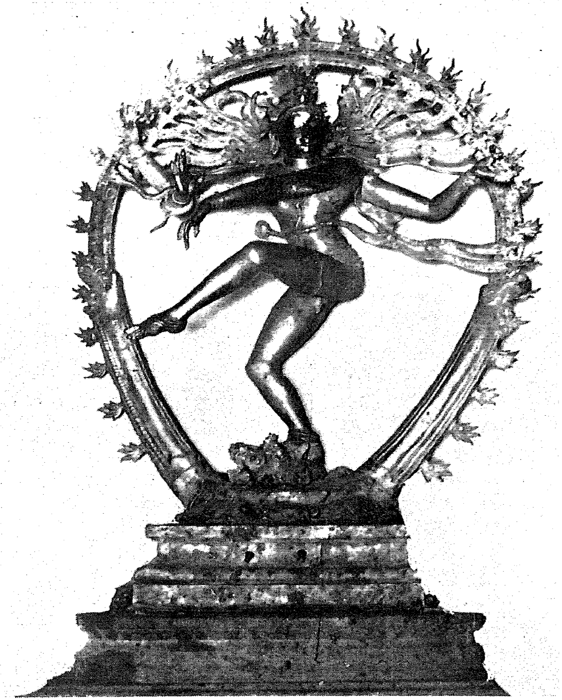
The Bodhisattva types already given will be recognised again in the fine bronze figure of Kālāri-mūrti, or Siva as the Conqueror of Death (Pl. LXIV, A), from the great temple of Tanjore, representing the perfection of Chola art in the tenth and eleventh centuries. A touching legend is told in explanation of this conception of Siva. A famous Rishi who was childless prayed to the Great God that he might be blessed with a son. Siva appeared to him and gave him the choice of having many stupid sons who would live long, or one exceedingly clever who would

die in his sixteenth year. The Rishi craved the latter boon, and his wife in due course bore him a son who was called Mārkandēya. As the child grew up and showed wonderful genius, the father's heart grew sad at the prospect of his impending fate, and revealed the secret to Mārkandēya, who forthwith set out on a pilgrimage to all of Siva's *tirths*, and while he was worshipping the lingam at Tirukkadanur in the Tanjore district, Kāla, the Lord of Death, sent his messengers to take him. They tried to bind the boy's soul with the fatal noose, but failed to do so, and went back to report the case to their master. Kāla, who then came in person, was at the point of taking the young Brahman as he still prayed when Siva Himself in wrath burst out of the lingam and with his lotus foot struck Kāla senseless to the ground. As a reward for Mārkandēya's devotion Siva then bestowed upon him the gift of eternal youth, so that he is still believed to live as one of the blessed saints.

Another aspect of Siva is that of Dakshinā-mūrti, which represents the gracious Lord of Knowledge who taught the Rishis philosophy, music, and art. These attributes are also transferred to Siva's *sakti*, Dūrgā or Devi, who in the beautiful bronze from the Madras Museum (Pl. LXIV, B) closely resembles the Java sculpture of Avalokītēshvara given in Pl. LVII, A.

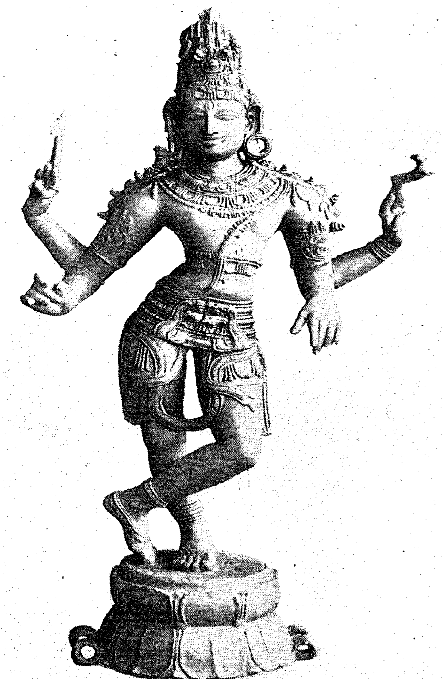
But the most characteristic conception of Saiva sculpture, and the one to which no parallel is found in early Buddhist art, is that of Nātārāja, "the Lord of the Dance." It is useless to look for the inception of this *motif* in the earliest stone and metal images of it, by which we can trace it back to about the sixth century A.D., for we have to reckon with a period of unknown antiquity when it must have been carved in wood, and with a still more remote

Plate LXVa



SIVA AS NĀTĀRĀJA

Plate LXVb



SIVA AS SANDHYĀ-NṚITTA-MŪRTI

period when the idea itself was existing, but had not yet been expressed in the forms of art. Probably the germ of it, and the origin of the Saiva cult itself, is to be looked for in remote Vedic times when the phenomena and elements of nature which the Aryans worshipped were the subject of keen observation and study. What was the meaning of the quivering of the sun's orb as it touched the horizon morning and evening? they asked. They have given their answer to the question in the image of the Lord of the Universe (Pl. LXV) dancing as He enters the halls of the world-temple through its "arch of radiance" (*pravā-torana*),[1] rejoicing always, even in His work of dissolution which is the gateway to eternal bliss. The idea of the sun dancing is current in Europe at the present day: in Scandinavia it is still a popular custom to rise early on Whit-Sunday and climb the nearest hill to see the sun dance. Dr. Barnett, in his *Antiquities of India* (p. 27), explains the motive of the Nātārāja as a "devil-dance"; but dancing as an expression of religious devotion is not confined to the ritual of devil-worship, and the fact that Siva is represented dancing *upon* a dwarf devil sufficiently indicates that he is here invoked as the Spirit of Goodness.

In the Rig-Veda one can follow the logical sequence of our Aryan progenitors' deep investigations into the phenomena of life and of the religious theories they based upon them. Fire (Agni), they found, is in the sun; in the air it appears as lightning; in water as *soma*; it is in the earth; in the trees of the forest it is produced by the fire-drill; and heat, the essential element of fire, is in man, animals, and plants. Heat was therefore, they argued, the primal element of

[1] The name of the halo of fire which surrounds the image of Nātārāja. See *South Indian Bronzes*, by O. C. Gangoly, p. 48.

life, and in the grand hymn X. 29 of the Rig Veda the Aryan seers propounded the theory of the first cause and of the nature of the Great Unknown Spirit, which was the starting-point of later philosophical schools:

> There was not Existence nor Non-Existence;
> The Kingdom of Air nor the Sky beyond.
> What was there to contain, to cover in—
> Were there but vast unfathom'd depths of Water?
>
> There was no Death there, nor Immortality;
> No Sun was there, dividing Day from Night:
> Then was there only THAT resting within ITSELF;
> Apart from IT there was not anything.
>
> At first within the Darkness veil'd in Darkness,
> Chaos unknowable, the All lay hid:
> When sudden from the formless Void emerging,
> By the great power of Heat was born that Germ.
>
> Thereafter came Desire, the primal root of Mind;
> Being from non-Being sprung, our Rishis tell:
> But came the vital pow'r from earth or heav'n?
> What hidden force impell'd this parting here?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Who knows whence this was born or how it came?
> The gods themselves are later than this time—
> He only, the Creator, truly knoweth this.
> And even He, perhaps, may know it not.

The Buddha took the agnostic attitude indicated in the last lines of the great hymn, and left it to Brahman philosophers to work out the full theory of the first cause propounded in the Vedanta. Their disciples, again, making an apotheosis of the Vedic seer in the person of the hermit-god dwelling among the eternal snows, joined the primitive Aryan sun-worship to this philosophic teaching, so as to make a "way of knowledge" easy for unlearned folk to follow. It is thus that there is so much primitive folk-lore mixed up

with the esoteric teaching of the Saiva cult, as indeed is the case in all religions.

The Madras Museum has several very fine Nātārājas of the Chola period,[1] but the image still worshipped in the great temple of Tanjore is perhaps the most impressive rendering of the Saiva conception of the cosmic dance which the Chola sculptors achieved. The temple was completed about the beginning of the eleventh century: the image may have belonged to an earlier shrine. Mr. O. C. Gangoly, who first published the Tanjore image in his excellent book on *South Indian Bronzes*, makes it older than any of the Madras Museum Nātārājas; but apart from the evidence of style and technique, the introduction of the crocodile-dragon in the halo, or "arch of radiance," of the Tanjore bronze points to a later date. In the earlier Indian rendering of this sun-symbolism, as seen in the Buddhist "horse-shoe" arches, the crocodile-dragon, the demon of darkness, who swallows the sun at night and releases it in the morning, is not combined with these sun-windows until after the development of the Mahāyāna school.

The Silpa-Sāstrās distinguish between two forms of the dance—the *Sādā-nritta*, the Dance of Dissolution shown in the Tanjore image, which symbolises Siva's spiritual and material manifestations in the cosmos, and the *Sandhyā-nritta*, which is much quieter in movement, and is directly associated with the time of the Brahman's evening prayer at sunset. This latter is shown in the bronze from the Colombo Museum (Pl. LXV, B).

A legend told in the *Koyil Purānam* reads like the attempt of a Brahman *littérateur* to answer the

[1] See Pl. VII and VIII in *Ideals of Indian Art*, and Pl. XXV in *Indian Sculpture and Painting*.

inquiries of the pilgrim crowd as to the meaning of the image: it need not be taken to indicate the original intention of the artist. Siva, it is said, disguised as a Yogi, came to a public disputation and confounded all the assembled philosophers so that they, in a rage, tried to destroy him by evil mantras. Lighting the sacrificial fires they created a ferocious tiger, which Siva seized and, stripping off its skin with the nail of his little finger, wrapped it round his loins. The disappointed magicians next created a monstrous serpent, which the Great Yogi took and wreathed about his neck. Then he began to dance. At last an evil spirit in the form of a dwarf sprang out of the sacrificial flames and rushed upon him. But Siva trampled it under his feet, and as all the gods assembled he resumed his triumphal dance.

The artistic intention was doubtless more simple and more natural. Siva, as before stated, was the apotheosis of the Brahman ascetic, whose attempts to penetrate into the secrets of the Universe are summed up in the Upanishads. As the supreme deity of the Saivas and the incontrovertible exponent of the *jnāna-marga*, the way of knowledge, Siva was associated with the Vedic sacrificial cult of Sūrya and Agni, the sun and fire Spirits. When a Brahman artist wished to create an image of the sun-dance, which he witnessed every day at the time of worship, he naturally personified the sun as the Great Ascetic in his mystic universal dance.

The demon upon which the Sun-god is trampling is analogous to the powers of darkness which Vishnu defeated in the Churning of the Ocean, or the demon Vrita, whom Indra overcame with his thunderbolt. The tiger-skin is the usual wear of the Brahman ascetic. The drum which he holds in the right upper hand is

the usual Indian instrument for beating time in dancing. The little figure of the Ganges goddess upon the wavy braided locks which form a halo round his head shows that the latter symbolises the sacred rivers which flow from Siva's paradise on Mount Kailāsa. The flame held in the left upper hand is a symbol of the Vedic sacrifice and of the Fire-spirit, Agni. The cobra is the natural symbol of the Lord of Death and of the theory of reincarnation which was one of the maxims of Brahman philosophy; its deadly poison suggested the one idea, and its habit of shedding its skin and reappearing with an apparently new body the other. The twofold nature of the divinity, Spirit and Matter, another philosophical doctrine, is suggested by the difference in the ear ornaments—on the right side a man's and on the left a woman's.

The mystical interpretations of this very natural primitive imagery, rendered by the Indian sculptor with consummate artistic power, were probably read into it later, as Brahmanical metaphysics developed partly under the influence of Buddhism. Then the demon of darkness was explained as the threefold snare of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The tiger-skin was the fury of human passion, which Siva subdues and wears as a garment: his necklet was man's deceit and evil-thinking transmuted into pure gold by the alembic of the Divine Spirit. And the dance was the cosmic rhythm made visible as He touched the earth with His lotus-foot, the energy creating and destroying all the worlds, the principle of life and death.

This later phase of Brahmanical thought is beautifully expressed in the Sanskrit Slokas still chanted in the temple service of Nātārāja in South Indian temples:

"O Lord of the Dance, Who calls by beat of drum all who are absorbed in worldly things; and dispels the fear of the humble[1] and comforts them with His Love divine: Who points to His uplifted Lotus-foot as the refuge of salvation: Who carries the fire of sacrifice and dances in the Hall of the Universe, do Thou protect us!"

There is a simple and natural reason, apart from philosophy and metaphysics, why the Nātārāja as a symbol of the Universal Lord appealed more to the people of Southern India, who never saw the eternal snows, than the image of the Mahā-Yogi of the Himālayas. In the dawn of Indian civilisation the great mountain chain which stretches along the western coast was to the people of the adjoining low-country what the Himālayas were to the non-Aryan people of the Indus and Ganges valleys. It was up there, in the cool heights overlooking the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, that their Aryan teachers and law-givers lived, the Brahmans who taught them the science and art of the Vedas, and the Kshatriya warriors under whose protection peaceful villagers were safe from the savage marauders who had their lairs in the heart of the jungles. And in the pellucid air of the Western Ghats, washed clean by monsoon storms, the Brahman at his evening prayers heard day by day Siva's drum, the time-beat of the ocean, thundering along the shore, and saw the golden sun throbbing on the western horizon as it sank slowly into the jaws of the mysterious dragon of the nether world. So the Brahmanical art of Southern India is a true interpretation of Indian history and, like all true art, holds the mirror up to nature in revealing to us the beatific vision of the Universal Lord in his mystic

[1] By the gesture of the right lower hand.

PLATE LXVIA



SIVA AS BHAIRAVA

PLATE LXVIB



DŪRGĀ SLAYING MAHISURA

Dance of Creation and Dissolution. And in like manner the calm serenity of those majestic peaks of the Himālayas in the still moonlit nights, when every sound is hushed and all nature lies asleep, gave to the northern artist his inspiration for the image of the Lord upon His exalted Lotus-throne, the Great Spirit "brooding over the face of the waters" who is the Cause everlasting of the cosmic rhythm.

The Tanjore Nātārāja is distinguished by being the largest of South Indian images yet discovered, the figure being nearly four feet high, excluding the pedestal and the halo of fire.

Siva's dance is also represented on a larger scale and with tremendous vigour in the mutilated sculptures of Elephanta and Ellora. The benign aspect of Siva's cosmic energy is that which is generally worshipped in Southern India, and for that reason Saiva temples there generally face the rising sun. But Siva's place in the Trimūrti, the Three Aspects of the One, represented at Elephanta, is determined by his *tāmasic* or destructive aspect in which the sculptor, instead of giving him the gracious gesture, dispelling fear, shows him with a boar's tusks and a terrific mien holding a sword and a cup made from a human skull, with other symbols of the dread powers of involution manifested in nature. This is the view which appeals most to the Saiva ascetic, who keeps strictly to the *jnāna-marga*; it is analogous to the pessimistic attitude of the early Buddhist who followed the path leading to Nirvāna.

A superb fragment among the sculptures of Elephanta shows Siva in his *tāmasic* aspect as Bhairava, the Terrible (Pl. LXVI, A). From a similar sculpture in the temple of the Ten Incarnations at Ellora, where the subject is treated with great dramatic

power but less technical refinement, we can gather that Bhairava is engaged in the destruction of the demon Ratnāsura, assisted by Kālī, who is shown as a grim and gaunt ogress armed with a sacrificial knife: Parvati, Siva's Himālayan bride, looking on worshipfully at the awful manifestation of the Great God's *tāmasic* powers. The Ellora temple can be approximately dated about the beginning of the eighth century. The Elephanta sculpture is perhaps a century earlier.

Parvati herself, under the name of Dūrgā the Inaccessible, also assists in the constant struggle of the gods with the powers of darkness, her chief opponent being a buffalo-demon, Mahisura, who caused much trouble in the heavenly regions. This is the subject of the great sculpture from Java now in the Ethnographic Museum at Leyden (Pl. LXVI, B), in which Dūrgā striding over the carcass of the dead buffalo is seizing the demon which comes out of its head in the form of a curly-headed dwarf. The same subject is also very powerfully treated in one of the Māmallapuram reliefs (Cave XXXII).

An important chapter in South Indian sculpture is filled with the images representing the *bhakti* phase of the Saiva cult, by which the Brahmans of the south tried to combat the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Jainism, and Vaishnavism. These are the idealised portrait statuettes of the Saiva teachers who from the sixth to the ninth centuries carried on a great popular propaganda and won as much veneration in the south as the Vedic Rishis or the Arahats of Buddhism. There are many popular legends still current of their devoted lives and of the miracles performed by them. The sculptors of the Chola period made many fine images of these canonised

Plate LXVIIa



A CHILD SAINT

Plate LXVIIb



SUNDARAMŪRTI SWĀMI

teachers which are still worshipped in Saiva temples together with the image of Nātārāja.

Two of such images which will bear comparison with the finest bronzes of the Renaissance in Europe are shown in Pl. LXVII. Fig. A is generally taken for the infant Krishna, but it lacks the royal crown which is almost invariably given to him: it most probably represents one of the Saiva teachers who, according to popular legends, began their mission in infancy.[1] It has the fine sentiment and masterly plastic technique of the early Chola bronzes, of the period when the sculptor carried his wax model to the fullest point of perfection, and the casting was so skilfully done that very little retouching with the chasing tool was needed. In the later works of the school the casting was less perfect, and the sculptor relied on the metal-worker's tools for most of the surface finishing, so that the modelling is inclined to be more cold and formal.

The elegant pose and finished technique of Pl. LXVII, B, might suggest that the unknown Chola sculptor had been influenced by the art of Europe were it not that he preceded the Italian Renaissance by several centuries. It is one of the images of Saiva Āchāryas, or spiritual teachers, worshipped in the great temple of Tanjore.[2] The movement of the left arm is accounted for by the fact that the figure is posed as if leaning lightly on a sannyāsin's staff, which the sculptor intended to be wrought separately on account of the great difficulty of casting it in the same mould as the figure.

In some of the later South Indian temple sculpture, during the time when the Hindu kingdoms kept up

[1] See *Ideals of Indian Art*, by the Author, p. 114.

[2] First published by Mr. O. C. Gangoly in his *South Indian Bronzes*.

close commercial intercourse with the Portuguese colony at Goa, the influence of European art can be traced in the direct imitation of classical Greek poses and an elaboration of the muscular system which is opposed to the true Indian ideal. This hybrid school is of more interest to the historian than to the artist.

CHAPTER III

THE TRIMŪRTI AND THE LESSER DEITIES

IT must be understood that the images of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva already illustrated belonged to the original conception of these deities as separate powers, each one of which was taken by his own devotees to be the Supreme God and had his own appropriate form of temple—the Brahmā temple open on all four sides; the Vishnu temple with one door towards the east, the shrine roofed by a sikhara; the Siva temple with one door towards the west, the shrine roofed by a stūpa-dome. But there was also a theological doctrine of the triune nature of the Supreme, a trinity which the Buddhists expressed by the formula of the Three Gems, Buddha—Sangha—Dharma, collectively representing the cosmos; and the Brahmans by the Three Aspects of the Godhead, Brahmā—Vishnu—Siva, who jointly represented a trinity of spirit and a trinity of matter.[1]

The germ of the metaphysical concept is probably to be found in the three strides of Vishnu, or the three positions of the sun, which correspond to the Brahman's *sandhyā*, the spiritual exercises he performs at sunrise, noon, and sunset. When, by an inductive process of reasoning, Vedic philosophy estab-

[1] *Sat-chit-ānandam* or Being, thought-power, and bliss, and *Sattvam-rajas-tāmas*, the conditions of creating, activity and preservation, and dissolution, or darkness.

lished the theory of the threefold nature of divinity, the separate sun-gods Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva came to be regarded as the Three in One through which the eternal unchangeable Brahman manifested itself in time and space, the unity of the Godhead being expressed by the name Ishvara, the Supreme Ruler, or Nārāyana, the primordial Being who lies under the cosmic waters during the Night of the Gods when all creation sleeps.

In spite of the countless gods and demi-gods which fill the Hindu pantheon, the belief in the underlying unity of the Godhead is common to all classes of instructed Hindus in the present day,[1] images being regarded as symbols of the manifold powers and aspects of divinity. The mystery of the Trinity is not often approached in Hindu temple sculpture. One of the few exceptions is the great temple of Elephanta, which has three entrances and a magnificent three-headed bust on a colossal scale occupying the principal shrine in the wall (Pl. LXVIII, A). The explanation of the three heads given by Dr. Burgess in his work on Elephanta which has hitherto been accepted by other writers is incorrect. The splendid photographs kindly placed at my disposal by M. Victor Goloubeff afford clear proof that the head in the right which Dr. Burgess took to be Vishnu is really a woman's head, and must be identified as Parvati, Siva's nature-force, taking the part of the Creator—a very appropriate idea for a temple dedicated to Siva.

The late Mr. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, in his admirable treatise on Hindu iconography, identified the Trimūrti of Elephanta with the five-headed form of Siva, or Mahēshamūrti. The reasons given are not, however, artistically convincing. It is difficult to understand

[1] See Census Report for 1901, vol. i, p. 363.

PLATE LXVIIIA



THE TRIMŪRTI, ELEPHANTA

PLATE LXVIIIB



BUDDHIST TRIMŪRTI, NEPAL

how a triple-headed figure in relief can be supposed to represent a five-headed figure in the round, and how six arms can be said to stand for the ten which are ascribed to the Mahēshamūrti. The three doors of the Elephanta temple, corresponding to the triple-shrine of the later Trimūrti temples, seem to point very clearly to the intention of the temple sculptors. Possibly the image (Pl. LIX, B), formerly placed in the four-doored Brahmā shrine now occupied by the lingam, is intended for the five-headed Mahēshamūrti, the Supreme Siva.

The majestic central head of the Trimūrti seems, therefore, to be Vishnu, for it bears the three jewelled discs upon his tiara for his three steps across the heavens; the necklet of pearls for the planets which glitter in the firmament; and the golden collar with the five jewels, the cosmic elements—ether (pearl), air (sapphire), fire (ruby), water (emerald), and earthly matter (diamond). These are all distinctive symbols of Vishnu, and do not appear in Brahmā images. The third head leaves no room for mistake, for the frowning brows and protruding tongue, the cobra twined in the hair, the skull and the trefoiled foliage,[1] show clearly that it is Siva in his *tāmasic* or destructive aspect.

The Trimūrti in Mahāyāna Buddhism is shown in the fine copper-gilt statuette from Nepal, of uncertain date, illustrated in Pl. LXVIII, B. It may have been brought from Bengal by Buddhist refugees in the stormy days of the first Muhammadan invasions, when the monasteries and temples in the sub-Himālayan districts, like those to the south of the Vīndhyan mountains, gave shelter to monks and craftsmen who

1 The leaf of the *bel* tree (*Crataeva religiosa*) and of the *nirgundi* (*Vitese trefoliata*).

escaped massacre or slavery. The traditions of North Indian temple metal-workers have been also preserved in Nepal to the present day, but owing to their inaccessibility the Nepalese monasteries and temples have not yet furnished as much material for the student of Indian sculpture as those of Southern India; but some fine images collected for the Government Art Gallery, Calcutta, are illustrated in my *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. The splendid temple lamps and sacrificial vessels of Nepal are better known, for they have long had an established place in the collections of curio-hunters.

THE LESSER DEITIES

To the deities symbolising the deeper metaphysical theories of Indo-Aryan religion are added a host of lesser divinities representing popular ideas, such as Kuvera, the god of wealth; Ganēsha, the elephant-god; and Hanuman, the monkey-god. Kuvera, the king of the gnomes, or *yakshas*, who guard the treasures hidden in the earth, is probably a creation of the miner's fancy. He appears in many countries under various forms. In India he was especially popular in the Gandharan country, and a stone sculpture from Huvishka's monastery (Pl. LXIX, A), now in the Mathurā Museum, shows him as a jovial and thirsty dwarf who is plied with drink by an attentive handmaiden. Here he is a very characteristic miner's hobgoblin. In the fine copper-gilt statuette from Nepal (Pl. LXIX, B) he is treated with more dignity and with greater technical refinement. He has here developed into a four-armed deity for which a fat Brahman teacher might have been the model. He is in the ritualistic pose of "royal ease," expounding

PLATE LXIXa



KUVERA, FROM GANDHĀRA

PLATE LXIXb



KUVERA, FROM NEPAL

PLATE LXXA



GANĒSHA

PLATE LXXB



HANUMAN

some points of doctrine. His *sakti* seated on his lap is missing.

Kuvera had his abode in the Himālayas, and was essentially a mountain gnome. In the Indian plains his place was taken by Ganēsha and by Hanumān. The former, otherwise known as Ganapati, or Vināyaka, is the King of the Ganas, or troops of minor devils who are under Siva's commands in the same way as the Buddha is said to have enrolled the hosts of the evil spirit, Mārā, in his service after he had foiled the tempter under the Bodhi-tree. Ganēsha probably was an aboriginal jungle deity brought into the Hindu pantheon as a son of Siva and teacher of wisdom. The quaint legend in the Purānas which accounts for his elephant's head and infant's body says that Parvati, when taking a bath, fashioned him from the scurf of her body and set him down to guard the entrance. He did his duty so valiantly that Siva himself could not gain admittance until he had cut off his head. Parvati insisted that her offspring should be restored to life, and as the child's head could not be found, Siva replaced it with that of the wisest of beasts. He thus was installed among the gods as the genial protector of households and the personification of common sense, whose aid should be first invoked in all worldly enterprises. He was also the scribe of the gods and the especial patron of authors, in which capacity he represented the traditional knowledge known as *smriti*, that which is remembered, as distinguished from *sruti*, the intimations of divine wisdom which come from God Himself and are given both to Brahman and Sūdra, the learned and the ignorant,

This quaint conception of worldly wisdom is one of the most popular of Hindu household gods, and is

often carved over the entrance doorway. The temple sculptors succeeded in investing his grotesque figure with much monumental dignity and sphinx-like mystery, as will be seen in the fine sculpture from Java (Pl. LXX, A).

Hanumān, the monkey-god, doubtless another aboriginal totem raised to a higher plane of thought by Hindu teachers and made one of the heroes of the Rāmāyana, takes the same place among Vaishnavas as Ganēsha does among the devotees of Siva. He is Rāma's faithful ally and messenger, the symbol of loyal devotion to the path of duty (*karma-marga*), which neither reasons nor questions, whether it leads to death and glory on the battle-field, or only to the dull drudgery of common daily life.

This was the spiritual ideal which Chaitānya and other great Vaishnava teachers opposed to the philosophic "way of knowledge," arguing that, as the love of God transcends all the wisdom which man can acquire, so unselfish devotion to God's service, both in the higher and lower walks of life, is the surest way to salvation, or liberation of the soul. "Whatsoever I do, with or without my will, being all surrendered to Thee, I do it as impelled by Thee."

This *bhakti*, the spiritual link which joins man and beast, effaces distinctions of class or caste and makes all humanity free:

"The same am I to all beings: there is none hateful to Me, nor dear. They verily who worship Me with *bhakti*, they are in Me and I in them" (Bhagavad Gīta, IX, 29).

The illustration Pl. LXXI, B, is from a bronze in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

SECTION III

PAINTING

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCIPLES OF INDIAN PAINTING, AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRINCIPAL SCHOOLS

THE principles of the art of painting were summarised by a Sanskrit writer, Vatsyāyana, of the third century A.D., under six categories:

1. Rūpu-bheda—the distinction of forms and appearances.
2. Pramānam—measurement, scale, and proportion.[1]
3. Bhāva—sentiment and expression.
4. Lāvanya Yojanam—the realisation of grace or beauty.
5. Sādriçyam—likeness or resemblance.
6. Varnikabhanga—the use of materials and implements.

The references in early Pāli and Sanskrit literature to "picture-halls" (chitra-sālas) in royal palaces, and to the skill of Indian kings, and of the lords and ladies of their court, in drawing and painting,[2] are very numerous, but no visible evidence of the works of the Indian court painters has come to light before the days of the Mogul Empire. A few rough drawings and paintings of prehistoric times have been recently discovered in the Raigarh State, Central Provinces, and in the Mirzapur district of the United Provinces.

[1] This was a system as exact as the rules for the Vedic sacrificial altars. Its canons are embodied in the Silpa-Sāstrās.

[2] See *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, by the Author, pp. 156–63.

Some few but very precious fragments of classic Indian painting have survived in the ancient monasteries of Ajantā and elsewhere, but with these exceptions the record of Indian painting before Muhammadan times seems to be a blank.

The chief reason for this striking contrast in the history of pictorial and plastic art in India is probably this, that from the time when Asoka determined to build the funeral monuments of Buddhist saints solidly in brick and stone instead of in impermanent materials, lasting at most for three generations, the art of the sculptor gradually took the foremost place in all religious works. The walls of the "picture-halls" in palaces and mansions were of wood, clay, or brick. Tempera or fresco paintings on these foundations, under the best conditions, would rarely last more than a few centuries in India. The banners painted with religious subjects hung up in temples and monasteries were still more liable to decay. So, although painting flourished, more especially in the chitra-sālas of princes, during the whole period of Buddhist and Hindu political supremacy in India, natural destructive agencies had obliterated most of the earlier works of Indian painters long before Muhammadan iconoclasts wreaked their fury upon the sculptures of temples and monasteries.

The court architect in these early times was perhaps also the court painter, and joined with the court poet and chronicler in recording the deeds of the royal house. But the builders employed by the great religious foundations usually combined sculpture with painting, as painted reliefs gradually superseded the fresco and tempera paintings which decorated the procession paths and assembly-halls of temples, relic-shrines and monasteries; for the artist-devotee who followed

PLATE LXXI



SIVA AND PARVATI, AJANTĀ

the *bhakti-marga*, giving up his life to the service of his patron saint or *devata*, was determined that his work, like the building itself, should be as durable as human skill and science could make it. Thus only could he acquire merit in the sight of the great artist of the Gods, Vishvakarma, his master, and hand it on to his children's children.

Painting on a grand scale, therefore, tended to become entirely subsidiary to sculpture; but nevertheless an indispensable art, for without the final *intonaco* of plaster, thinner than an egg-shell and highly polished, and the due performance of the eye-painting ceremony with its appropriate *mantras* which gave it the breath of life divine, a stone image was an inert block unfit for worship. The *intonaco* also protected the surface of the sculpture from exposure to weather. It could easily be renewed when necessary. The painting of temple banners and icons belonged to the calligrapher's art which was also the parent of the later schools of Indian miniature painters.

This very ancient art practice still survives among the traditions of the temple craftsmen of India. Hindu temples now built in Northern India, in the districts where red sandstone is mostly used, are still covered with this fine polished *intonaco*, and sometimes decorated with frescoes. In the days of the old John Company the interior walls and columns of Anglo-Indian mansions in Calcutta and Madras were often finished with this beautiful white polish; but the fresco-painting for which it was intended to be the ground was held to be inconsistent with the correct classic taste of those days, and in modern times patent paints of European brand and unwholesome wall-papers have been substituted for it. About fifteen years ago I brought some temple craftsmen from

Jaipur to teach the Indian process of fresco-painting in the Calcutta School of Art.[1] A panel in fresco executed at this time by Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, C.I.E., illustrating the story of Kacha and Devajānī in the Mahabhāratā,[2] is reproduced in Pl. LXXIX. These Jaipur craftsmen also renewed the polished plaster in the ballroom of Government House, Calcutta, by Lord Curzon's orders.

The preparation of the lime requires great care and patience, and its application to the surface of the walls is an art in itself, just as was the wax coating (ganōsis) applied to ancient Greek statuary. The degenerate practice followed in many old Hindu temples of frequently smearing all the building with whitewash is doubtless derived from the same tradition : but it is now done so unintelligently and unskilfully that the masterly technique of the original sculpture is obliterated by the plastering. In the temples which were desecrated by the Muhammadans and abandoned as places of worship the last painted *intonaco* put upon the stone would in most cases eventually disappear through natural causes, even when unscientific antiquarians have not assisted them in ignorance of the Indian sculptor-painter's technical methods. In favourable circumstances the astonishing permanence of Indian mural painting has been proved by the frescoes of Ajantā and Sīgirīya.

When these technical conditions are understood, it will be evident that the record of Indian religious painting in pre-Muhammadan times is not really so fragmentary as might appear at first sight, for in a complete history of the art the painted reliefs of

[1] A detailed description of the process is given in *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, pp. 267–72.

[2] Adi-Parva, I. 76–7. Rory's translation, pp. 232–40.

Bharhut, Sānchī, Amarāvatī, Borobudūr, and many other works of the temple sculptor-painters ought to be included. It will not, however, be possible in this work to do more than draw attention to this important point. It should also be noted that the traditions of the secular school of court miniature painters established under the Muhammadan emperors were partly derived from the painters of the chitra-sālas under the patronage of Hindu royalty, and partly from the monastic schools which produced painted icons and hieratical scrolls—the prototypes of the Japanese kakemono.

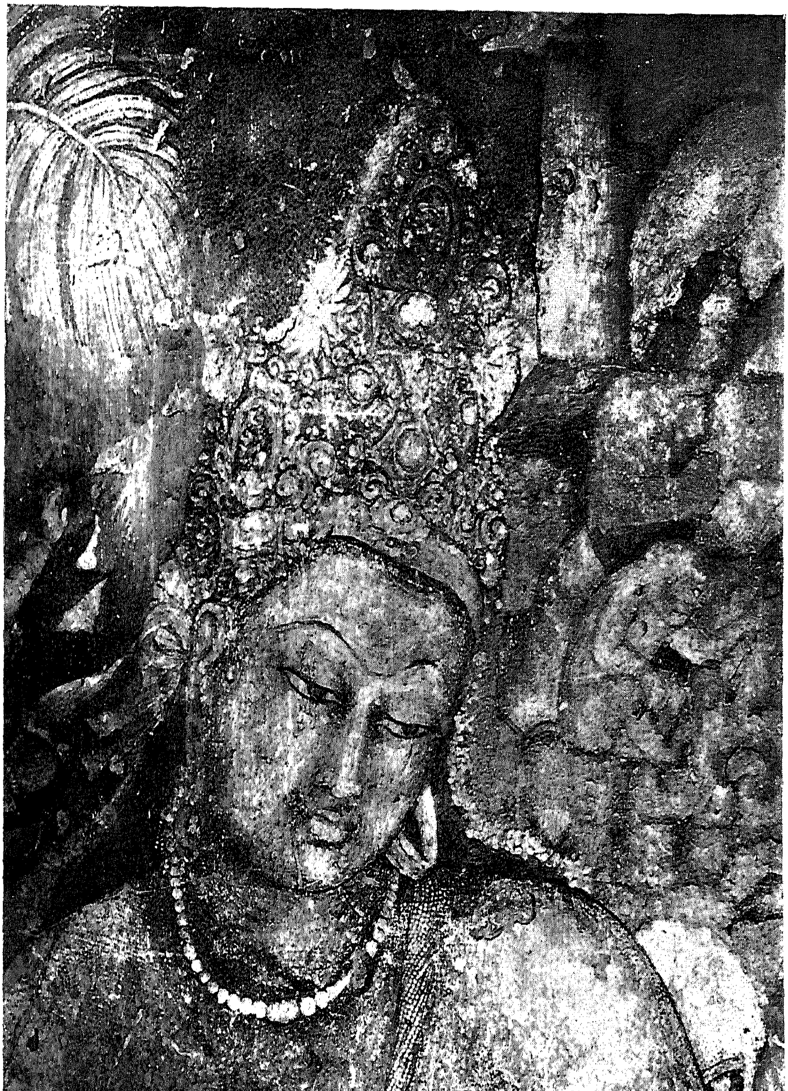
The first of the six artistic principles enunciated by Vatsyāyana—the distinction of forms and appearances—sums up the whole philosophy of Oriental painting, the systematic teaching of which at Nālanda and other universities of Mahāyāna Buddhism must have profoundly influenced the whole art of Asia. The theory applied to all branches of education, and the Mahabhāratā gives a striking illustration of its application in the martial training of the Pāndava war-chiefs. They were trained to arms not by a military expert of their own class, but by a wise Brahman, Drona, who by profound meditation had acquired a perfect knowledge of divine science. When their training was finished, he called them together and pointed out to the eldest a bird perched on a distant tree. "Do you see the bird on the top of that tree?" he asked. "Yes," said the pupil. "What do you see?" the master demanded, "myself, your brothers, or the tree?" The youth replied at once, "I see yourself, sir, my brothers, the tree and the bird." Drona then put him aside, and called up the others one by one. He asked the same question and received the same answer until it came to the turn of his favourite

pupil, Arjuna. "Now, Arjuna, take aim and tell me what you see—the bird, the tree, myself and your brothers?" "No," said Arjuna, "I see the bird alone, neither yourself, sir, nor the tree." "Describe the bird," said the Master. "I see only a bird's head," Arjuna replied. "Then shoot," cried Drona, and in an instant the arrow sped, the bird fell shot through the eye, and the teacher embraced his pupil with delight.

It is the same way in Indian art and in all Oriental art inspired by Indian idealism. The artist, through a process of severe mental discipline, is taught to discriminate the essentials in forms and appearances, and to see clearly with his mind's eye before he takes up brush or chisel. Once the image is firmly fixed in the mirror of his mind by intense concentration, or when the dæmon residing in the object to be depicted has been made to manifest itself by the power of yoga, the realisation of it, facilitated by the technical traditions of the school taught under the other five categories, was swift and sure. Rūpa-bheda is *sruti*—the revelation of the divine. The science of art—the rules of proportion, expression, beauty, likeness, and the use of tools—is of the kind of knowledge described as *smriti*—that which is remembered, or handed down by tradition.

Beneath the transcendental conceptions of Indian religious art as we see them at Ajantā and elsewhere, there is, however, an undertone of intense realism. Nothing could be more real and alive than the figures with which Buddhist artists peopled what Europeans call the unseen world. To them it was the real world in which their lives were spent; only the immortals were made not of common clay. There is abundant evidence of the most careful study of nature in the

Plate LXXII



HEAD OF BODHISATTVA, AJANTĀ

movement of the figures, in the expressive drawing of the hands, and in the way in which the hang of jewelled ornaments upon the body is made to explain its form and action.

The jewellery in Indian painting and sculpture plays the same part as the grace-notes or microtones in Indian music. The artist unfolds his main scheme with the simplest and most direct methods, a simplicity not impelled by weakness, but by the urgent desire to get to the heart of the matter at once. The contours and modelling of the main forms are thus treated with the greatest boldness and breadth, and at the same time with a firmness and decision which are the exact opposites of the halting rhythm of many Western experimentalists of modern times, who, without an age-long tradition of culture to guide them, try to invoke the spirit of the East. By way of contrast to these broad effects, the jewellery and other accessories are used as sparkling points of interest which are elaborated with the minutest finish and delicacy of touch. By these contrasting methods the best Indian painters achieved a perfectly balanced rhythm and fullness of contents without overcrowding.

The Ajantā paintings now extant cover a period of about six centuries, from *circ.* A.D. 100 to *circ.* 628. They were first satisfactorily photographed about eight years ago, through the enterprise of Lieut.-Colonel Victor Goloubeff, the editor of *Ars Asiatica,* who presented a set of his splendid photographs to the Musée Cernuschi in Paris, which gives a much clearer impression of the spirit and wonderful technique of these masterpieces of the classic art of India than the copies made by the students of the Bombay School of Art, which provided the material for Mr. John Griffiths' well-known volume on *Ajantā* (1897). The more

sympathetic copies subsequently made by Lady Herringham, assisted by the pupils of Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, are exhibited in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and were published by the India Society in 1915.

Two of Lieut.-Colonel Goloubeff's photographs, typical of the best work of the Ajantā school, are given in Pls. LXXI, LXXII. The first, from a ceiling panel in Cave I, shows Parvati sitting on Siva's lap and receiving instruction from the great Guru. The subject occurs more than once in the later paintings of Ajantā, for Mahāyāna Buddhism allowed to all Brahmanical deities a place in its pantheon. Parvati is drawn with a few sweeping brush-strokes which sum up in perfect rhythm the sweetness and purity of the Lady of the snows listening attentively to her lord's teaching. Siva's figure is less searchingly drawn: the painter has concentrated most upon the pose and expression of the two heads—Siva's a noble god-like type, and Parvati's with the surpassing grace of pure saintly womanhood. Behind the figures is a background of conventional clouds; the two deities are poised in the heavenly regions like birds resting on their wings, an idea which Indian artists always expressed finely without giving to the Devas any bird-like attributes. The practice of yoga made them familiar with the idea of levitation and demonstrated to them its possibilities even for mortal flesh and blood.

The head of the Bodhisattva (Pl. LXXII), with the royal crown and his long hair braided with jessamine flowers, belongs to the central figure in the wall-painting of the same monastic hall, which probably represents the marriage of Prince Siddhartha—a subject in which the Ajantā painters have drawn

PLATE LXXIIIA



PAINTING FROM SIGIRĪYA

PLATE LXXIIIB



PAINTING FROM SIGIRĪYA

upon the myth of Vishnu and Lakshmi. The Bodhisattva holds in his right hand Vishnu's blue lotus, and his tiara bears the three jewelled sun-discs like the Vishnu in the Trimūrti sculpture of Elephanta. The figure is over life-size, and is one of the most finished and powerful in technique of the Ajantā paintings. It is supposed to belong to about the beginning of the seventh century.

The frescoes of Sigirīya in Ceylon are painted in two recesses of the rock on the hill which was the retreat of the parricide King Kasyapa I at the end of the fifth century. Owing to their almost inaccessible position, they are in a better state of preservation, and thus more suitable for reproduction, than any of the Ajantā paintings. They are closely related to the Ajantā school. The subject is a procession of royal ladies, supposed to be Kasyapa's queens, with attendants bringing floral offerings, to a shrine which seems to be located in the Tusitā heavens, for the figures appear as if half immersed in clouds—the usual convention for the heavenly spheres.

The finest of the figures (Pl. LXXIII) are drawn by a master's hand, swift and sure, but swayed by the impulse of the moment, as one can see by the rapid alteration of the pose of an arm or hand visible in some of the paintings. These exhibit the best qualities of the Ajantā paintings and of the great masters of China and Japan. Others are less subtle in the drawing and more laboured in the modelling—evidently the work of pupils.

The Sigirīya paintings, if they may be attributed correctly to Kasyapa's court painters, are the only extant works of the secular schools of Indian painting before Muhammadan times. But possibly they were painted by the monks of the neighbouring Buddhist

monastery. In any case, no line of demarcation can be drawn between secular and religious painting in the Buddhist and Hindu period except as regards the choice of subject. Kings and queens, as sons and daughters of the gods, were endowed with all the physical and spiritual graces of divinity, and found easy access to the heavenly regions even in their lifetime.

It was different with the Muhammadan rulers, who patronised painting as a court accomplishment. The law of the Prophet condemned painting as a fine art, and a strict Musalman only indulged his artistic taste in calligraphy, transcribing the texts of the Kuran, verses of his favourite poets, or Persian quatrains of his own composition. Calligraphy was therefore the means of acquiring religious merit, and was valued higher as an art than picture-painting, even by the Shiahs, who had no puritan scruples. Some of the best Muhammadan painters were those who combined book illustration with calligraphy. But Muhammadan pictures, as distinguished from illuminated manuscripts, very rarely had a religious character, though scenes from the life of Muhammad and of Musalman saints are sometimes found. Muhammadan painting on the whole is realistic and matter-of-fact in its outlook, secular in subject, and wholly devoid of the spiritual emotion which inspired the work of the Buddhist and Hindu artist. Abul Fayl, Akbar's biographer, felt the difference when he noted that "Hindu pictures surpass our conception of things."

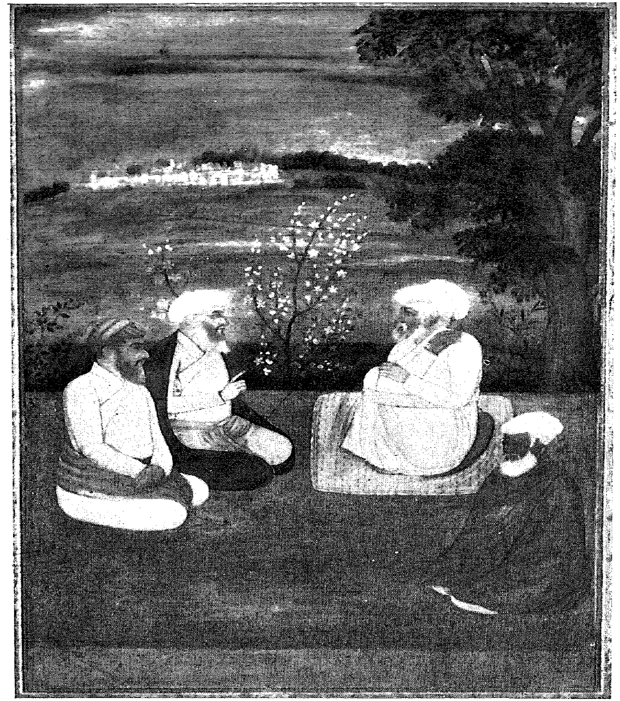
Before Akbar brought the Indian painter and the Persian and Arabian calligraphist together, there had been a great Muhammadan school of miniaturists, led by Bihzad, a famous master who flourished at the end of the fifteenth century at the court of Khurasan.

PLATE LXXIVA



PORTRAIT OF SURĀJ MALL, BY NANHA

PLATE LXXIVB



MĪĀN SHAH MIR AND MULLA SHAH

But this Saracenic art did not spring ready-made from the brain of a single man of genius. Like early Saracenic architecture, it had its roots in the far older Buddhist culture, in the art of icon and religious picture painters who still carry on their ancient traditions, originally derived from India, in the monasteries of Nepal, Sikkim, and Tibet, and in all the countries of Asia where Buddhism still survives.

Mogul painting, or the school which flourished most under the patronage of Akbar, Jahāngīr, and Shah Jahān, was, like Urdu, the language of the Mogul court and camp, composed of heterogeneous elements—but they never completely coalesced. It is always easy to distinguish the native Indian tradition from that of the Muhammadan artist-penman, for the Hindu knew how to combine the art of line and form as the great masters of Ajantā had done, and there is a subtle vein of idealism in his conceptions which reveals his introspective bent of mind. The Musalman painter of the Persian school rarely shook off the technique of the calligraphist : very often, in the Mogul miniatures, the brush outline is the work of one artist and the colouring of another. This artificial division of labour was foreign to the indigenous Indian school.

A typical painting of the Hindu school, and one of the finest of the great gallery of portraits with which the Mogul court painters illuminated the history of the period, is shown in Pl. LXXIV, A. It belongs to a series of pictures from Jahāngīr's own collection discovered by me in Calcutta and purchased for the Government Art Gallery. The Emperor, who was justly proud of his court painters' skill, stamped it with his seal and wrote a note in Persian on the right lower corner which shows that it is a portrait of Surāj

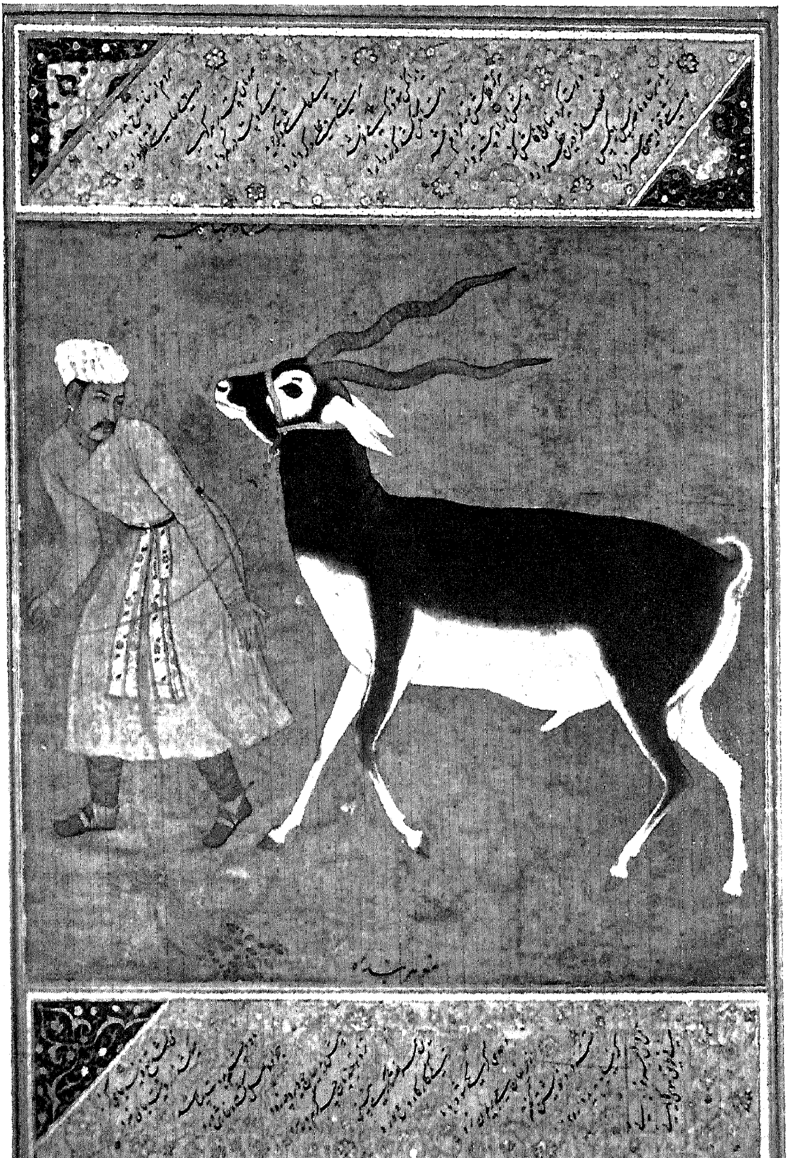
Mal, the son of Amar Singh, painted by an artist named Nanha. Amar Singh was the Rānā of Mewār, who in 1614 submitted to the imperial army, much to Jahāngīr's satisfaction; for Akbar, though he captured Chitor, could never force the Rānā himself to his knees. Jahāngīr attempted to conciliate the Rajputs in the same way as his father had done, and had marble statues of the Rānā and his son Karan put up in the imperial palace at Agra. The other son, whose portrait was added to Jahāngīr's collection, is not mentioned by name in his memoirs.[1]

There are no traces of the calligraphist's technique in this painting—it is a real painter's picture. The contours are sharply defined, but the original outline is wholly merged in the subsequent painting. It is possible that European pictures, which Jahāngīr admired and gave to his painters to copy, may have influenced the artist's manner. But it is more likely that the natural development of the indigenous Indian school since the time of Ajantā produced this result. In the broad but subtle modelling of the forms, and the minute finish of the gold brocade and other ornamental accessories, the painter's technique is closely allied to the later style of the Ajantā school.

Another great master of Jahāngīr's court early in the seventeenth century, and afterwards in the service of Shah Jahān, was Manohar Dās, a Hindu painter whose work is well represented in the collection of Lady Wantage lately exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum. "A royal keeper leading a decoy antelope" by Manohar (Pl. LXXV) is perhaps

[1] Jahāngīr in his memoirs refers only to Surāj Mal (or Surāj Singh), the son of Rājā Bāsu of Kangra, who was alternately in favour and in disgrace at the court. Possibly he was the subject of the painting, for Jāhāngīr, in his frequent drunken carouses, might easily have made a mistake in a detail of this kind.

PLATE LXXV



A ROYAL KEEPER AND DECOY ANTELOPE

PLATE LXXVI



SHAH JAHĀN HOLDING A DURBAR

one of the finest genre pictures of the Mogul school. It was the custom in hunting black buck to let loose a trained decoy buck to fight the leader of a herd. The picture shows the sleek, well-fed animal—a little reluctant, it seems, to perform the rôle of betraying its own species—being led out by its keeper when the herd came in sight. It is a magnificent study of animal life, and the coaxing attitude and expression of the keeper, as if trying to overcome the hesitation of his well-trained pet, is perfect in characterisation and technique.

Pl. LXXIV, B, is by one of Shah Jahān's court painters. It can be correctly described as Indo-Persian, a name often indiscriminately applied to all Indian miniature paintings. This is distinctly of the calligraphic school. It is a coloured drawing rather than a painting. There is little surface modelling; the forms are expressed almost entirely by the clearly marked outlines, by flat washes of colour, and fine stippling of the details. The subject is Mīān Shah Mīr of Lahore, Dārā Shikōh's spiritual guide, conversing with his disciple, Mulla Shah of Badakshan.

Many of the Mogul miniatures of the calligraphic school are only highly finished drawings, differing generally from the style of the Persian school by the cameo-like precision of the delicate brush outline. This is a characteristic which exactly expresses the technical distinction between all Indian scripts and the easy flowing curves of Persian and Arabic—the former being derived from the use of the stilus, and the later from a flexible pen or brush writing.

An interesting historical example of the calligraphic artist's work is shown in Pl. LXXVI, representing Shah Jahān in Durbar. The original is in the National Art Museum, Copenhagen.

When the Mogul school, in the middle of the seventeenth century, resolved into its original constituent elements through Aurangzīb's banishment of Hindu painters from his court, the latter continued to find patronage at the Hindu courts and among the higher classes of the people. But the designation of "Rajput" which Dr. Coomaraswamy and other writers have applied to the extant works of the later Hindu painters is far too narrow and apt to be very misleading, for, although the traditions of Hindu painting had more vitality in Rajputana than elsewhere, they were by no means exclusively Rajput. The classifications of "Mogul," "Buddhist," and "Hindu" which I adopted in the original collection made for the Calcutta Art Gallery are more correct.

In Mogul times and later there were Hindu schools at Benares, in the Panjab and Kashmir, in Bengal, in Gujerat, in the Dekhan, and in South India, besides the Buddhist schools of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, and Burma, which were unaffected by Muhammadan influence and are still alive. Burma, as regards painting, is still a *terra incognita* to Anglo-Indian and Indian connoisseurs, though, even in the present day, it has a very interesting traditional school.

At present our knowledge of the later Hindu schools is almost entirely confined to examples painted on paper, as the painters in the service of Hindu rājās imitated the fashions of the Mogul court in the same way as they now imitate the art fashions of Europe. But nearly all Hindu painters, when painting on paper, followed closely the traditional technique of mural painting, and their paintings are exact reproductions of the frescoes of the Hindu chitra-sāla, or picture-hall. It is not unlikely that further investigation of the subject by Indians who can gain access to the

Plate LXXVIIa



SIVA WORSHIPPERS

Plate LXXVIIb



HUNTING BY LAMPLIGHT

private apartments of old Hindu families will reveal the existence of the original wall-paintings which are now only known to Europeans by small reproductions on paper. Indian artistic culture is still to a large extent an unexplored domain.

It is not possible in this brief summary to attempt to define the different local styles recognised by Indian connoisseurs, but a few illustrations will serve to bring out some of the main distinctions between Hindu and Musalman painting. The choice of subject shows the difference as clearly as anything else. The Muhammadan painter was almost exclusively concerned with court and camp life, its pageantry and history. But as a courtier he never revealed its inner secrets or told unpleasant truths. Except when he illustrated the mysticism of Sūfi poetry, religion hardly entered into his ideas of art; he reconciled his religious and artistic conscience by leaving it alone.

The Hindu artist, on the other hand, was both a court chronicler and a religious teacher. Vaishnava and Saiva legends, in which the gods descended to earth, lived the life of the people, and performed wondrous miracles, were their favourite themes, treated with all the reverence of the earnest devotee. But though the Hindu painter imbues such subjects with a sensitiveness and artistic charm which are peculiarly his own, the appeal which he makes to the Indian mind is not purely æsthetic. His is no art for art's sake: for the Hindu draws no distinctions between what is sacred and profane. The deepest mysteries are clothed by him in the most familiar garb. So in the intimate scenes of ordinary village life he constantly brings before the spectator the esoteric teaching of his religious cult, knowing that the mysticism of

the picture will find a ready response even from the unlettered peasant. That which seems to the modern Western onlooker to be strange and unreal, often indeed gross, is to the Hindu mystic quite natural and obviously true.

We are often reminded of the ancient Chandra cult and of India's name as the Land of the Moon by the frequent choice of night scenes—women praying at Siva's shrine under the crescent moon; Rādha seeking her beloved Krishna in the dark forest at midnight; two lovers riding by torchlight through a mountain pass; hunting by lamplight on the banks of a moonlit river; pilgrims sitting round a camp fire listening to the tales of a village Kathak.

The two illustrations given in Pl. LXXVII will show with what rare intuition the Hindu painter interpreted the religious feelings of the people, and the penetrative insight of his communings with the spirits of river, wood, and sky. In the first a mother with her son and daughter-in-law are worshipping at a wayside shrine under a tamarind-tree. The draperies have suffered from unskilful restoration, but the power and feeling with which the effect of night is given makes us understand Rembrandt's interest in Indian painting.[1] In the same spirit the great Dutch master illustrated Biblical stories.

The hunting scene, fortunately in a perfect state of preservation, is perhaps intended to illustrate Rāma's life in exile on the banks of the Godaveri. There is much in it, especially in the group of deer startled by the fall of their leader, to suggest a connection with the traditions of the classic Indian school, as we know them from Ajantā.

Specially characteristic of the Hindu artist's spiritual

[1] See *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, by the Author, pp. 202–4.

PLATE LXXVIIIA



RĀG-MĀLA PAINTING

PLATE LXXVIIIB



RĀG-MĀLA PAINTING

outlook are the pictures representing the Rāg-mālas,[1] or melody-pictures, in which Indian music is translated into pictorial terms. A Rāga in music is the traditional melodic pattern with which the Indian musician weaves his improvisations, each Rāga symbolising in rhythmic form some emotion such as love, some elemental force such as fire, or a particular aspect of nature such as the forest at midnight, or the refreshing showers of spring associated with the playing of Krishna's flute as he dances with the cow-girls of Brindāban.

The systems of Rāgas, or principal modes, vary somewhat. According to one of them there are six, appropriate to the six seasons with which the Hindu year is divided. Each Rāga is subdivided into five Rāginīs, which, again, have each eight subdivisions, or pūtras. The Rāgas and their subdivisions give the dominant idea of the musician's theme, the season and hour of the day or night appropriate for it, and by their magic create a suitable atmosphere. The musician, by the incantations of his song or lute, can, like Orpheus, conjure with the spirits of earth and sky and flood and bring his hearers into touch with the harmonies of nature. The painter translates these melodic patterns into his own language by forming a mental image of the impression the music makes upon him—it may be the apparition of the special muse or divinity who presides over each Rāga or Rāginī, or the activity of the elemental forces which the magic of the music invokes.

Pl. LXXVIII gives two typical Rāg-mālas. In the first, Fig. A, the lady seated under a flowering tree is pouring out her soul in song to the accompaniment of her vīna, while the pet gazelle by her side, the birds

[1] Literally "Garlands of Rāgas."

and even the tree seem to be attentive listeners. The next probably belongs to one of a Vaishnava series of musical modes—Rādha is wandering over the moonlit fields of Brindāban asking the peafowl where her beloved Krishna can be found.

The old traditions of Hindu painting still linger among the temple craftsmen of India, in the ritual of the Hindu womenfolk, and but rarely at the courts of the Hindu princes, though a few descendants of the old court painters still practise their art. A systematic investigation of these living traditions would certainly yield material of the highest artistic and archæological interest, and help the technical development of the important new school of Indian painting which has arisen in the last twenty years at Calcutta under the leadership of Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, C.I.E. The genesis of the school was described by me in two numbers of the *Studio* magazine.[1] The annual exhibitions of its works in Calcutta, and those which were held in Paris and in London in recent years, have demonstrated its further development much more completely than it would be possible to attempt in this handbook, which will, however, serve to explain the historical foundation upon which Mr. Tagore and his pupils are trying to build, and some of the artistic ideals which inspire their work.

[1] October 1902 and July 1908.

PLATE LXXIX



KĀCHA AND DEVAJĀNI

(From a Fresco Painting by Mr. Abanindro Nath Tagore, C.I.E.)

INDEX

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